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STRANGE LIVES

By BERNHARDT J. HURWOOD

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STRANGE LIVES

By BERNHARDT J. HURWOOD

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To my wife, without whose patience, editorial acumen, and nose for a good tale, this book could not have been written.

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PREFACE

Long introductions are frequently boring, and often serve no better purpose than to send readers scurrying off to find greener pastures elsewhere. Therefore this will be short—an aperitif rather than an antidote.

The sole purpose of this collection of strange and curious tales is to entertain. Gathering them was a pleasant task. Each was chosen for the story value it contains. Every one can be told over and over, so that all are assets to the person who does not believe that storytelling is a dying art.

I hope that there is something here for everyone, for the range of subjects is wide. Here you will find love and laughter, death and terror, ghosts and werewolves, heroes and scoundrels. You may start at the beginning, the middle, or the end, depending upon where your own fancy leads you. Since several of these tales concern famous persons, events, or things, a few may strike familiar chords. Many others, however, have never appeared before, or have not seen the light of day for centuries. If this book proves as pleasurable to the reader as it did to the writer, then its mission will have been more than accomplished.

Bernhardt J. Hurwood

STRANGE LIVES

The Inhospitable Grave of Cahors

The city of Cahors, in southwestern France, is an ancient town, and was a prosperous community as far back as the days of the Roman Empire. In medieval times there was much banditry and bloodshed in the district. Powerful, unscrupulous barons waged continuous warfare against each other, killing or plundering many innocent people in the process.

To prevent perpetual fighting from decimating the countryside, the ecclesiastical authorities decreed a "Truce of God," a mandatory cessation of hostilities during a specified period each week. In other words it was perfectly permissible for the barons to kill one another from Monday through Thursday (for example), but on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday it was taboo. Anyone who violated the truce was subject to excommunication. The truce was generally obeyed and quite effective—with one noteworthy exception.

Towards the middle of the eleventh century, an especially rapine nobleman, whose castle was not far from Cahors, became entirely too rampageous to suit the bishop. Besides frequently violating the truce, this baron had committed numerous more serious crimes, not excluding blasphemy. He was warned several times, but he did nothing to mend his ways. Accordingly he was excommunicated.

Shortly thereafter, the baron was killed during one of his moonlight forays. His family and friends, convinced that the bishop would relent and grant the dead man absolution, went ahead and made plans for a splendid funeral which included a solemn requiem mass followed by interment in the family vault within the church itself. This was to be followed by daily masses, one a day, for the next month.

The wrath of the bishop had not been reckoned with. His patience exhausted by the continual depredations of these lawless nobles, he not only refused to lift his interdiction but flatly vetoed any funeral rites within the precincts of the church.

The dead man's family was furious. Without the bishop,

they could not hold the masses, but the burial was a different matter. Escorting the baron's corpse into town with a band of armed soldiers, they marched into church, sealed it in the tomb, and left defiantly.

The following dawn, however, revealed a fearful and mysterious happening. Lying grotesquely in the town square was a naked corpse. As though it had been flung there violently, it was bruised, scratched, and contorted. A close examination revealed it to be the baron's. When his tomb was inspected the seal was found intact.

The henchmen of the deceased opened the tomb a second time and found in it only the winding sheet in which the body had been wrapped. Replacing the cerements about the corpse, they carefully put it back in the vault and resealed it. As a gesture of defiant contempt, they even sealed up all the entrances of the church before returning to the castle.

It was of no use. Early the next morning the body was found once again, having been flung even more contemptuously into the square than before. For the third time they entombed the battered corpse, only to discover on the following morning that it had been cast out of the grave again.

Twice more they attempted to seal their former master in his tomb with no more success than they had met in the beginning. Their arrogance turned to fear and desperation. The body was beginning to decompose badly. There was only one thing left for them to do. Wrapping it up for a last time, they carried it off to a secret spot in a desolate area far from Cahors. There they dug a deep grave into which they hurriedly dumped the stinking corpse, covered it over with earth, and hastened away after marking the location with a small cairn.

The rest of the marauding barons were deeply impressed with what had befallen the earthly remains of their former colleague. Each visited the bishop with a suitably humble demeanor. Not one was anxious to meet a like ignominious end. Each readily agreed to observe the Truce of God faithfully, and to respect the sanctity of the church. In the course of their penance, the diocese was considerably enriched. Furthermore there was a marked increase of peace and quiet. It even became possible for simple people to leave their homes after dark without fear of being seized, maimed, or killed.

Was this indeed a supernatural phenomenon, or did the Bishop of Cahors have architectural secrets which he and his acolytes shared with no one but God?

The Rat Surgeon

There have been many strange encounters between man and rat, but none so peculiar as one which occurred during the Civil War in a Petersburg, Virginia hospital. One of the patients, a soldier recuperating from a skull fracture, was in an uncomfortable position. A large splinter was protruding through his forehead from the frontal bone of his skull. Not only was it retarding the healing process, it was so firmly in place that the surgeons were unable to take it out. They were short of anesthetics and were afraid to attempt to remove the bone without their use. The next best thing, they reasoned, was to do whatever they could to assist nature in rejecting the fragment. With that in mind they began applying doughnut shaped poultices to the wound which fit around the protruding bone. One night, shortly after he had fallen asleep, the patient was awakened abruptly by a sharp, stinging sensation in his head. He spotted a medium sized rat scurrying toward the foot of his bed with what appeared to be a piece of bone in its mouth. He struck at the rodent, but missed. In the morning, when the doctors examined the wound, they discovered that the offending bone fragment had been cleanly and efficiently removed. What had happened was this: the rat, attracted probably by the odor of the poultice, was drawn at once to the bone. While the patient slept, the creature accomplished with his tiny teeth, what the surgeons were afraid to try with their instruments. The wound was thoroughly cleansed, dressed, and within a few days the wound was well on the way to being completely healed.

The Scottish William Tell

One day while hunting in the royal forest a Scot named McLeod was attacked by a huge and savage hound. Seizing his dirk he stabbed repeatedly at the snarling beast until it fell dead, after which McLeod bound his wounds as best he could and made his way home.

Now, the incident might have ended right there, had not the slain dog been a favorite of King Malcolm's, a discovery McLeod made when he was promptly arrested that night by the king's guards and dragged into the royal presence. Malcolm, enraged over the loss of his dog, ordered McLeod hanged the following morning. A gibbet was erected on Craig Choinnich, and word of the impending execution spread fast.

By dawn, a silent but sympathetic crowd had gathered about the north gate of the castle. Soon McLeod was led out under heavy guard, followed by the king and his nobles. Not a word was spoken. Armor clanked, horses snorted and McLeod was led precipitously towards the scaffold, apparently doomed as a sacrifice to the king's vengeance.

Suddenly, as they neared the banks of the River Dee, McLeod's young wife, carrying a small child in her arms, rushed before the king's horse and flung herself down to beg for his life. In exchange, she offered all the McLeods owned—but to no avail. Malcolm merely fixed a cold eye on her. Seeing that her entreaties were wasted, she forced herself to McLeod's side, threw her free arm around his neck, and declared that she would die with him.

At this, Malcolm betrayed a slight hint of admiration. He appreciated bravery. A noble, noticing a change in the king's expression, leaned forward and whispered,

"It would be a pity to hang such a splendid archer, my lord."

"A splendid archer is he?" retorted Malcom, raising his eyebrows, "Then we shall try his skill."

Halting the procession, he ordered McLeod's wife and child

to stand on the far bank of the Dee, and that an object be placed on the youngster's head as a target.

"Now," announced Malcolm loudly, "if this fine archer can hit the mark without touching his wife or child, I shall grant him his life."

An excited murmur erupted amongst the crowd, particularly at the river-wide range of the critical shot. As the throng gathered eagerly about McLeod, the fetters were cut from his wrists and he rubbed them to restore his circulation.

"I'll have a strong bow and two arrows," he said grimly.

McLeod examined the weapons handed to him in a deathly silence disturbed only by the occasional song of a passing bird and the rushing of the river's waters. Then he took his archer's stance—and paused for a moment to look at his tearful wife, who, across the Dee, clutched the gurgling child with the target on its head.

McLeod slowly raised the bow and aimed. He was trembling like a blade of grass in a windstorm. He lowered the bow, took a deep breath, and got into position again. Still he trembled so badly he was unable to shoot. Turning to the king, who stood closely at his right, McLeod said hoarsely,

"This is hard."

Malcolm merely half-sneered, half-smirked at the wretched archer, in contempt and anticipation. For a third time McLeod assumed his shooting stance. Once again he turned to the king, and with a fierce glare cried out,

"This is hard!"

Now, as if all his tension had flown with his cry, he aimed and let fly. It pierced its mark dead center. The crowd's cheers of joy echoed and re-echoed through the highland hills and the valleys below. The mother hugged her child and wept with relief and pride. McLeod, his face glistening with perspiration, stood as though anchored to the spot as the king approached, confirmed his pardon, and asked,

"Tell me, man, if you were so sure of hand and keen of eye, why did you call for two arrows?"

"Because," answered McLeod, "had I missed and hurt my wife or child, I was determined ne'er to miss you."

Malcolm, surprised at such a frank reply, at first scowled, then held out his hand warmly to McLeod as he said,

"A man with stout a heart as yours belongs in the royal bodyguard. Wear my crest, bear my arms, and your family will never know want for as long as they live."

McLeod threw the bow and arrow to the ground, drew back, and said defiantly,

"Never! After the painful test to which you've put my heart I could never serve you faithfully."

Shocked, yet filled with admiration, Malcolm roared,

"By God, you are a Hardy! And as Hardy you are, then Hardy you shall be!"

So from that time on, by royal decree, McLeod went by the honored name of Hardy, and his descendants were, and are to this day, called the MacHardys.

Since this event is said to have taken place around the year 1060, it predates William Tell by over two hundred years. As many a Scot has said in telling the tale,

"Our story is nae a corruption of William Tell, though William Tell's may weel be a corruption of ours."

The Revenge of Pietro delle Viti

The Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick I, better known as Barbarossa, for many years waged a bitter struggle against the authority of the pope. The pontiff, Alexander III, had no intention of yielding an inch, and excommunicated Barbarossa when he began laying waste the dominions of the church.

At the time, Barbarossa, a German, had in his service a scholarly Italian secretary named Pietro delle Viti. The emperor's other counselors, also German, were jealous of delle Viti's influence over their master and began a slanderous whispering campaign against him.

Eventually Barbarossa came to believe these vicious libels. He had delle Viti's eyes put out as punishment for his alleged crimes. A short time afterwards, however, the emperor discovered that his harsh treatment of the poor man had been unjustified, and he returned delle Viti to his former position of honor.

By now, Barbarossa's wars had driven him into narrow financial straits. Pietro delle Viti advised his liege that if he wished to fight the church successfully, he should do so with the church's own resources.

"Seize its gold and its silver." counseled delle Viti. "Melt down these riches and use them to maintain your armies."

Regarding this as sound fiscal advice, the emperor ordered his troops to plunder the churches of every Italian city they captured. In Pisa especially, Barbarossa incurred the pope's wrath, for the German soldiers made off with the celebrated golden chain completely encircling that city's cathedral. When the ravages were done with, delle Viti said to Barbarossa:

"Sire, I have now avenged myself for the wrongful mutilation you have inflicted upon me. Now you have assured yourself the hatred of all men, for by the sacrilege you have perpetrated, you are doomed to suffer the enmity of God."

Although the emperor suffered both victories and defeats afterwards, he eventually gave in to Pope Alexander, and went to pay him homage. The reconciliation itself took place in 1177 in the lobby of the basilica of St. Mark's in Venice. Tradition has it that when Barbarossa prostrated himself before the pontiff, before kissing his feet, he muttered defiantly,

"It is not to thee, but to St. Peter I kneel."

To which the pope replied sternly, "Both to me and St. Peter."

And to Pietro delle Viti too, Barbarossa almost certainly had to add in his crushed heart.

The Possessed

Instances of alleged demoniac possession and the accompanying exorcism were quite commonplace in earlier times. Ponderous volumes on the subject were written by scholars and theologians right into the nineteenth century. Though few believe in such things today, there are occasional inexplicable

events which are attributed to the presence of evil spirits, or, lacking a better term, demons. During the nineteen-fifties, in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, a boy in his early teens was suddenly felled by a mysterious seizure. He had been in perfect health all his life. Yet now he was convulsed by violent twitchings, jerks, and hideous facial contortions. From time to time he would utter incredible obscenities, mingled with unintelligible shrieks, moans, and screams which appeared to be in some unfamiliar language. The family doctor was unable to do anything beyond administering a powerful sedative. It was only partially successful. In desperation the youth's parents summoned their minister. He came and spent the entire night in prayer beside the afflicted boy's bed. By morning the clergyman was convinced that he was in the presence of something incredibly evil—something beyond the powers of medical science, and beyond him as well. On an impulse he telephoned a friend in St. Louis who was a Roman Catholic priest. The priest recommended that the boy be brought to his rectory at once. It was difficult getting him into the car, but they managed to get him to the church in St. Louis. The priest had looked up a medieval exorcism rite and had it ready. When the boy was brought in his body stiffened. Roaring horribly, he twisted and struggled to escape. It took the minister and eleven priests to hold the youngster and get him to a couch. But when the exorcism was concluded, the victim returned to normal, and was never troubled again.

The Cannibals of Wollsin

During the periodic outbreaks of the Black Death in Europe, the ensuing collapse of society and civil authority resulted in unspeakable horrors. "Often," said one historian, "it is reported that the raging peasant roasted noblemen in the presence of their wives and children, and then forced the wives to eat their flesh and ultimately murdered them after the most brutal violation."

Cannibalism, however, was sometimes simply a result of sheer desperation born of hunger. Typical of such dreadful incidents was the case of a family named Burghard living in a tiny village called Wollsin.

Joachim Burghard owned a small farm. With the help of his wife and two sons, Adam and Fritchen, he managed to eke out a bare existence until the year 1638, when the family found itself on the brink of starvation. Between famine and plague they had been unable to harvest any crops for several years. All of the chickens, pigs, and dogs had been eaten along with the cow and horses. Death seemed closer every day.

Finally Burghard decided to abandon his farm and with his sons seek other means of staying alive in the neighboring town of Lippäen. His wife would join them later. The three men left one morning, but unfortunately were so undernourished that they were unable to reach Lippäen by nightfall. Since the road was extremely perilous after dark, they proceeded to the nearby hamlet of Kleinbroeden.

Burghard's brother had once lived in Kleinbroeden with his family. Now, with the exception of a single niece, all were dead of the plague. Still, it was a place to stay. . . .

Dusk had fallen when they arrived at the crumbling ruin. The meeting with the surviving niece was dismal. The young woman was emaciated, and half-mad from hunger. Worse yet, she was burdened with a gaunt infant scarcely three weeks old and feared for its life, knowing that for herself, survival was virtually impossible. There was nothing to eat, not even a stale crust of bread. For the past eleven weeks, she told her uncle, she had existed on roots and acorns. For the three weeks before the baby's birth, and the three weeks since, she had been barely able to leave her bed. She had dragged herself about only when absolutely necessary.

Confronted by this scene of abject misery Burghard was unable to maintain his own grasp on reason. For months, as his frame grew skinnier, his eyes had grown wilder. Now, with his belly growling for food, his lips cracked, and his muscles aching, he seized a bedpost and, disregarding nearly everything his niece had said, raised it over her head, crying out,

"Listen to me, girl! You must give us something to eat now or we'll die—the lot of us."

Briefly he eyed a large brown rat scurrying across the room. The eldest son, Adam, lunged for the creature, but it darted

into a heap of rotting debris and disappeared. Burghard turned back to his feverish niece.

"Well?" he threatened.

The girl reached under her pillow, drew out a key and handed it to her uncle.

"Here," she said emptily. "Look in the cupboard for yourself. There is nothing."

Burghard snatched the key from her bony fingers. In his fumbling haste, he almost tore the cupboard doors off, but it was as the girl had said—nothing but dust and a few rotting lettuce leaves. This final disappointment shoved the three starving Burghards over the edge of sanity. They looked first at each other, then at the girl, then advanced silently on the bed, determined to make a meal of its trembling occupant.

"Pray to God, and beg for His mercy," said Burghard thickly, "for now you must die and be our food."

With that strange calmness that so often descends upon the condemned, the young woman told the three maddened men softly,

"Eat me if you will. I would starve to death soon in any case. But please, dear uncle, do not harm my child—and may God have mercy on us all."

All four paused long enough to intone a brief, solemn prayer. A travesty on faith, one might consider it—the butchers and the lamb praying together before the slaughter. Immediately after the final "Amen," the terrified girl clenched her fists and screwed her eyes shut with a convulsive shudder. She was about to say a final "Hail Mary" when the three knives struck. Not once did she struggle or cry out.

When she was dead, the Burghards stripped the meager flesh from the bones, gobbling a few raw chunks as they worked. Then, building a small fire, they roasted another portion and ate again while the baby whimpered softly in its cradle. The balance of the flesh they pickled in a keg with rock salt and sealed it carefully for the return trip home in the morning. For by now they had given up any idea of proceeding to Lippäen.

Frau Burghard was overjoyed when her three men told her that they had brought back something to eat. They did not, of course, reveal the truth. Burghard merely told his wife that they had found a stray pig, slaughtered it, and temporarily changed their plans about going to Lippäen. The starving

woman could hardly wait to boil some of the precious "pork." When it was slightly cooked, she sat down and ate it with her husband and sons.

According to a contemporary account, ". . . because the sick woman was full of plague they all died within four days, with the exception of the youngest son, Fritchen Burghard." A few days later, the frightened, guilt-ridden youth went to the authorities at Lippäen and told them the whole ghastly story.

He was held in custody while the corpse collectors were sent to search both his father's house and the scene of the slaying. The ravaged bones of the unhappy victim were found along with the pitiful remains of her dead baby. Also discovered, at Burghard's cottage, was the keg containing a quantity of the murdered girl's flesh. Keg, bones and infant corpse were buried in the churchyard.

Some days later, Fritchen Burghard died in jail. On the following June 2nd, a complete account of the events was inscribed on a stone tablet. This was placed in the little cemetery as a perpetual memorial to those who had suffered, and had been driven to commit such monstrous deeds.

The Hero Who Died as a Fiend

Only perhaps in the works of the Marquis de Sade is there a more fantastic, paradoxical character than Gilles de Laval, Baron de Rais. Although his amazing career has provided countless authors with ample material for fictional treatment, de Rais himself was as real as the Brittany in which he lived and died.

Born in the year 1404 into a rich, powerful family, Gilles was, after his father's death, brought up by his maternal grandfather, Jean de Craon. Even as a boy, he was a brilliant student in history and the arts. In time he became an accomplished musician, dramatist, artist, illuminator and book-

binder. From his beginning, a serene, aristocratic future seemed assured. Yet it is as a demon that his name lingers in history.

When Gilles was 13 his grandfather arranged a marriage for him, but the young lady died. A second bride was selected the following year, but she too died, leaving Gilles totally unconcerned: women were never to be among his many interests. A hardier young noblewoman, Katherine de Thouars, finally survived to become the Baroness de Rais, and through her fortune to make Gilles one of the richest men in Europe.

After a dazzling wedding, Gilles went through the formality of a honeymoon. Although the process obviously did not appeal to him, he succeeded in impregnating his wife, and thereafter paid no further attention to her, having thus assured himself of an heir.

At this stage of his career there was little to distinguish Gilles de Rais from any number of other French noblemen. Even his preference for members of his own sex was not altogether uncommon. Joining the army he displayed immediate outstanding military leadership. In 1426 he raised seven companies of soldiers and plunged relentlessly into the war against England.

Now his star ascended rapidly. He came into favor with the Dauphin (later King Charles VIII), and, when he was not battling the enemies of France, lived in lavish splendor more like a king or an emperor than a baron. He had a private retinue of two hundred armed knights. He maintained one of the finest libraries in France, and a number of impressive private chapels, castles, and chateaus. He staged extravagant theatrical productions. He supported artists, musicians, and sycophants. In short, he was the prototype of a *grand seigneur*, developing into an extraordinary epicure whose profligacy could only lead to disaster.

Still, at 25, Gilles was appointed Marshall of France and was granted permission to wear the royal Fleur de Lys on the border of his shield. And then, shortly after his appointment, he attained his pinnacle of glory. He met Joan of Arc, and was promptly smitten with religious fervor. He became thoroughly convinced that in the person of this simple girl lay the salvation of France. Joan in turn recognized Gilles as an exceptional soldier, and requested that he become her personal protector on the battlefield.

For a time they fought the English side by side, but on one

fatal occasion the king requested Gilles' presence elsewhere, and the Maid of Orleans was captured. Determined to rescue her, Gilles and his troops battered at the English for months without success. At Joan's martyrdom Gilles was disconsolate. Abandoning his brilliant military career he returned to his Brittany estates—and plunged into the frenzied existence that led him to ruin, disgrace, and perpetual infamy.

His extravagance grew boundless. He began selling properties to pay for the services of necromancers, sorcerers, magicians. His distraught wife left him in 1434, an event he hardly noticed. Dark rumors began circulating that the *seigneur* was now an alchemist and a disciple of Satan, that he presided over black masses, orgies, and other debaucheries. It was whispered that a number of children who had disappeared, especially boys, had last been seen in the vicinity of his properties. Peasants passing by near dusk shuddered and crossed themselves.

By 1436 Gilles' relatives obtained an order from King Charles VII to prohibit any further sales of the family property, a decree ignored by Duke Jean V of Brittany and his chancellor, the bishop of Nantes, Jean de Malestroit, who kept buying up all available de Rais properties at favorable prices. Gilles himself was obsessed by his search for the legendary philosophers' stone, which would according to popular belief transmute base elements into gold. With it, he told himself, he could easily buy back everything he had sold.

But at about this time Gilles made a fatal misstep. He had sold one of his castles, Saint Etienne de Malemort, to the Treasurer of Brittany, Geoffroi le Ferron, but when the Treasurer's brother, Jean le Ferron, came to take title, Gilles had him seized, imprisoned, and beaten. Jean le Ferron was a priest; his maltreatment gave Bishop de Malestroit the excuse he needed to have Gilles arrested on an espiscopal order. The bishop, who had been awaiting an opportunity to confiscate the de Rais lands, brought forth on July 29, 1440, an indictment of 47 charges, including infringement of clerical immunity, sacrilege, heresy, the invocation of demons, sexual perversions, and murder.

The trial of Gilles de Rais, conducted jointly by ecclesiastical and secular authorities, was the most shocking of the 15th century, and perhaps of all time. The testimony was bloody, grisly, and horrifying beyond belief.

A typical charge was that de Rais had,

". . . taken innocent boys and girls, and inhumanly butchered, killed, dismembered, burned, and otherwise tortured them, and that the said Gilles, accused, has immolated the bodies of the said innocents to devils, and has foully committed the sin of sodomy with young boys and in other ways lusted against nature after young girls, spurning the natural way of copulation . . ."

Witnesses testified in minute detail as to the specific debaucheries alleged to have been committed by Gilles. They read like the case histories of Krafft-Ebing.

On October 21, 1440, after torture or threat of it (accounts differ), Gilles de Rais "voluntarily and freely" confessed to all 47 charges. He described how he had personally cut children's heads off and then committed further depravities. He finished by asking that "the fathers and mothers of those so piteously slain pray for me." He also requested that the entire catalogue of his crimes be publicly announced.

The ecclesiastical and secular courts divided up the appropriate charges between them and found Gilles guilty on all counts after 40 days of trial. The secular court ordered that all Gilles' property be confiscated, then sentenced him to be strangled and burned with two of his accomplices.

The sentence was carried out in Nantes on October 26, 1440. After prayers, final confession, and penitence, Gilles was granted absolution. At the head of a colorful procession he marched humbly to the pyre, but instead of burning, his body was removed by special permission and buried in a neighboring Carmelite church.

Although Gilles de Rais is generally believed to have been guilty, an aura of irregularity still surrounds the circumstances of his arrest, trial, and conviction. Duke Jean and Bishop de Malestroit had too much to gain at Gilles' ruin to be impartial. At the trial itself, none of Gilles' 500 servants was called to testify. Witnesses who claimed to have seen him commit specific crimes, did so only after being brutally tortured. Lastly, his chief collaborator in magic and alchemy, a Florentine necromancer, Father Francesco Prelati, was freed several months afterwards.

Indeed, so suspect was the evidence against Gilles that a contemporary historian, Enguerrand de Monstrelet, said of the affair,

"The greater part of Brittany's nobles, most especially those

of his own kindred, were in the utmost grief and confusion at his disgraceful death."

It is most ironic that the name of Gilles de Rais came in time to be connected with the legendary Bluebeard, who was supposed to have slain seven wives. The only wife he ever had left him long before his spectacular demise at the age of 36.

A String of Weird Coincidences

Shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy, a compilation of uncanny parallels relating him to Abraham Lincoln began circulating around the country. Both presidents had actively worked for civil rights. Lincoln was elected in 1860, exactly one hundred years before Kennedy. Both were shot in the head from behind and in the presence of their wives. Both were succeeded by Southern Democrats named Johnson who had served as United States Senators. Andrew Johnson was born in 1808, Lyndon Johnson was born a hundred years later in 1908. Similarly, John Wilkes Booth was born exactly one century before Lee Harvey Oswald—Booth in 1839, Oswald in 1939. Abraham Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy who tried to talk him out of going to Ford's Theater on the fatal night. John F. Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln who attempted to dissuade him from flying to Dallas. Booth fired at Lincoln in a theater and fled to a warehouse. Oswald fired at Kennedy while in a warehouse and fled to a theater. There are seven letters each in the names Lincoln and Kennedy. There are fifteen letters each in the names John Wilkes Booth and Lee Harvey Oswald. Finally there are thirteen letters each in the names Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson. These curious parallels finally diverge. Andrew Johnson was defeated at the polls by a Republican general, whose last name began with the letter G, Ulysses S. Grant. Lyndon Johnson reversed matters by defeating a Republican general whose last name begins with the letter G.

Although Barry Goldwater was in the U.S. Senate before the presidential campaign, he also held at the time a reserve commission as major-general in the Air Force.

The King Who Became a Porter

A very old account about a Polish monarch has become a parable in more recent times. The king's name is not known, but it seems that he disappeared one day while hunting. After several days of frantic search, his royal ministers finally found him disguised as a porter in the market place of a neighboring village. The king was not only dressed in coarse garb but was earning small sums of money by carrying heavy burdens on his shoulders.

At first the courtiers could not believe their eyes. Certainly this porter could not be their ruler. But at length they approached him and saw that he was indeed the missing king.

"Your Majesty," said one, "how can such a noble person as the king debase himself by so vile an employment?"

"Upon my honor, gentlemen," replied the king, "the load which I have quit is by far heavier than the ones you see me carry here. The heaviest bale is but a straw compared to that world under which I labored."

"But surely, Your Majesty does not intend to continue thus any longer?" said the startled minister.

The king smiled and said, "I have slept more in the past four nights than ever before during my entire reign. I have begun to live for the first time and be king of myself. Go and elect whomever you choose to assume the throne. For me, feeling as well as I do now, it would be madness to return to court."

With that he turned and resumed his labors, never to enter the capital again.

The Bishop and the Chocolate Drinking Ladies of Chiapas

Chiapas is the southernmost state of Mexico. Its capital, San Cristobal, was founded in 1525, and as the seat of the bishopric, grew rapidly into a wealthy, if isolated, community.

In the 17th century, however, San Cristobal was still regarded by outsiders as a small, unimportant cathedral town. Some 400 Spanish and Creole and about 100 Indian families lived there. Besides the cathedral there were two monasteries, a Dominican and a Franciscan, and a single, poverty-stricken nunnery.

News from the outside world was infrequent and outdated when it arrived in San Cristobal. The men were concerned primarily with cattle raising and the women with local gossip. Consequently Sundays at the cathedral were more social in character than religious.

The bishop, Don Bernardo de Salazar, became irritably aware of this fact when the ladies of his flock fell into the habit of bringing ample refreshments to his masses. Servants, stationed outside the church doors, would bring their mistresses silver trays laden with cups of savory chocolate, biscuits, and preserves. The good ladies did not seem to care at all that they were interfering with Divine services. They sipped, chattered, and munched from the time they arrived until the moment that they left. Most of the time murmuring voices and silver tinkling on dishes and trays completely drowned out the voices of the priests.

Don Bernardo came gradually to regard these women not only as a collective curse upon mankind but as his own personal cross. Try as he might, he could not dissuade them from eating and drinking during mass. One Sunday, for instance, he rose up in the pulpit and demanded,

"Have you not houses to eat and drink in? Do you despise the church of God that you must defile it by treating it like a common inn?"

But the ladies scarcely heard a word above their own din. They hushed—but only momentarily—when a servant had dropped a large tray, drenching the floor with chocolate which trickled sweetly amidst fragments of crockery, cookies, scattered spoons, and sticky smears of jam. Then, recovering from the crash, they went on talking.

For the next month, Don Bernardo devoted every sermon to a denunciation of eating and drinking in church. He might just as well have been addressing a flock of bleating sheep. It became obvious to the unhappy prelate that these addicts to the brew of the cocoa bean would never give up their obnoxious habit, unless he employed the ultimate ecclesiastical strategy. The next week he published a general ban of excommunication upon anyone who dared to eat or drink in the cathedral during mass.

The women were stunned. Besides the terrifying prospect of having the sacraments permanently denied them, they were downright annoyed at the way they were being treated. Quickly they organized a delegation, the representatives of which were admitted to Don Bernardo's presence.

"We must have our chocolate," demanded one lady of the bishop.

"It is a matter of tradition with us here," said another.

"And we have delicate digestions which need constant nourishment," complained a third.

Bishop Salazar listened patiently, then proceeded to tell them calmly but firmly that local custom had absolutely nothing to do with the case. Bad habits, he explained, were bad habits. The church, he said, was a place for spiritual, not bodily nourishment. They would have to learn how to pray while in church, and that was that.

"A strange shepherd, he concluded sharply, "would be he who let his sheep lead him."

Infuriated, one of the women rashly hinted that for Don Bernardo to persist in such an attitude could prove detrimental to his safety. To this he said curtly,

"My safety is in the hands of my Master," and with that dismissed his callers.

On Sunday the women appeared in force again for mass, but they defied the ban on refreshments and jabbered in their customary fashion. They did not, however take communion that week.

Don Bernardo was prepared to fight back on the following Sunday. He stationed canons and priests at all the cathedral entrances, ordering them to bar the way of any servants carrying trays. The servants gave the clerics no trouble at all, but unfortunately he had not reckoned with the wrath of his female parishioners. Rising from their pews like a horde of killer ants, they swarmed towards and routed the startled priests guarding the doors. The triumphant amazons then returned to their places, and in less time than it took to snap their fingers, the clinking and the clatter were as loud as ever before.

Don Bernardo was outraged. The next Sunday, when the chocolate drinkers began arriving, they found the cathedral completely surrounded by armed soldiers. Seeing that they hadn't a chance this time, they retreated and held a short conference. To the amazement of priests and troops alike, the women dispersed and went away. For the first time in what seemed to be ages, mass was conducted in peace.

As it turned out the women's strategy was simple. They merely headed straight for the neighboring monastery chapels, servants, refreshments, and all. The monks were more than happy to receive their visitors, for they were always in need of alms. Besides, the change of pace was a welcome one for them.

Bishop Salazar countered this move swiftly by forbidding the monastic orders to admit his parishioners to their chapels for Sunday masses. The women retaliated. Since they were not permitted to receive communion anyway, they just stayed home. For a full month the only worshippers on Sundays were a sprinkling of men, children, and poor Indians.

As the fifth week of the boycott approached, Don Bernardo began to ask himself if he had acted properly. By Saturday night, he was pacing back and forth in the flickering candlelight of his study, in a quandary. First he told himself that perhaps he had been too harsh. But then the stronger side of his nature prevailed. He was right; they were wrong, and there was to be no compromise.

Suddenly he became aware of two voices whispering in the corridor. Opening the door, he saw in the dimness of the passage his servant, Luis, talking to Dolores, a maid in the household of a wealthy San Cristobal family. Summoning Luis, Don Bernardo wearily asked the young man to bring

him a cup of hot chocolate. Despite certain unpleasant associations with the beverage, he enjoyed it before bedtime.

"Excuse me, *excelencia,*" said Luis, "but Dolores has brought a gift from her mistress, the Donna de Solis."

"A gift?" repeated the bishop with surprise.

"Si, excelencia," replied Luis, "it is a packet of her mistress's favorite chocolate."

Bishop Salazar suddenly grasped the implication. It was a peace offering. The women had finally decided to give in. He beamed at his servant, saying,

"Splendid, Luis, brew me the chocolate of Donna de Solis tonight instead of my own. I must retire at once, for my stray sheep will return to the fold tomorrow."

Don Bernardo was right. The next morning all the women were in the cathedral, just as they always had been in the past. Unfortunately their bishop was not with them. He had retired in the small hours of the morning to one of the monasteries with severe stomach pains. The physician who had been summoned out of his sleep diagnosed a severe case of mysterious poisoning.

For eight days Don Bernardo lingered in severe pain. When it became obvious that he was faltering, a priest was summoned to administer last rites. Just as he arrived the dying prelate struggled to raise himself, whispering,

"I forgive them for having caused my death, poor sheep . . ." and with that he died.

The wealthy families saw to it that he had a magnificent funeral. A great deal of chocolate was drunk in the cathedral during the high requiem mass as the choir chanted inspiring litanies.

Should you ever hear a Mexican repeat the old proverb, "Beware of tasting Chiapas chocolate," you will know its origin. Perhaps you will also ponder for a moment upon the sad fate of Don Bernardo de Salazar, Bishop of Chiapas.

The Day Nature Panicked

The Battle of Stone River, which raged from December 31, 1862 until January 2, 1863 was as fierce an engagement as any of the Civil War. Out of the nearly 75,000 troops involved, approximately one-third wound up as casualties. It was a battle of classic proportions, including bitter hand-to-hand fighting and massive artillery duels. Long afterwards survivors recalled that it was a time when the very earth and sky seemed on the verge of being blown to bits. Apparently the fighting men were not the only ones to feel this. At one point both Union and Confederate troops witnessed a strange and pitiful spectacle that none of them would ever forget. It began as a brace of wild turkeys, so paralyzed with fear that they were incapable of flight, emerged from the brush and began racing frantically among the embattled soldiers, desperately seeking places to hide. Almost immediately afterwards there appeared flocks of small birds, fluttering in hysterical bewilderment directly above the battlefield. As they darted wildly about, screeching in terror, buffeted by the concussion of exploding shells, an even stranger phenomenon occurred on the ground. Dozens of frightened rabbits began hopping madly in all directions in a desperate mass effort to escape from the horrifying din of exploding shells, flying lead, and steel. To the amazement of the men, lying huddled in their trenches and mud holes, the terrified little animals sought them out, creeping under their coats and between their legs. They nestled there trembling, ironically seeking refuge amidst the ranks of the most deadly creatures of all—the very ones responsible for the holocaust.

Rumbold the Amorous Highwayman

Ordinarily, tales about highwaymen, pirates, and other such scoundrels involve violence, tragedy, or high adventure. Yet, occasionally, hidden away between the moldering covers of centuries-old chronicles, we encounter distinct surprises. In one such "Book of Highwaymen, Scoundrels and Thieves," as many of these old collections of true crime were called, there lies buried the life story of a 16th century English bandit named Rumbold. He was the sort of fellow who, between more serious crimes, liked nothing better than to steal the favors of unsuspecting ladies. He survived for a much longer time than many of his colleagues, and enjoyed an extremely eventful life before his final rendezvous with the hangman.

The following account is typical of Rumbold's amorous pranks, and in order to preserve the flavor, it is presented here with a minimum of alteration from the original. If ever there were to be erected a Ribald Hall of Fame, Rumbold would certainly deserve a place in it. Indeed, he earns high honors as a distinct curiosity in the annals of true crime.

Rumbold the highwayman, deciding once to rob a certain gentleman's house near Uxbridge, put up at an inn in that town in order to carry out his scheme at the first opportunity. A number of people were lodged there, and it being winter, the time of long nights, many of the tedious hours were spent in gaming, drinking, and merry conversation. Every night all those present joined in these pleasant pastimes, until they grew weary and dropped sleepily away to bed.

Among the company was a man who had a very handsome wife. They slept in a chamber which had in it another bed. One night before retiring, the man, somewhat groggy with wine, laid his clothes upon his bed, put out his candle, and went to sleep. A little while afterward, our adventurer, who was to lie in the empty bed in the same chamber, came up and prepared for his slumber. But as he walked about, a conceit

came into his head that he might have a she-bedfellow that night.

In order to carry out his devious plan, he first took the husband's clothes from off his bed. Then, removing his own clothes, he placed them very orderly upon that very same place. On the bed in which he was to lie, Rumbold fairly spread the sleeping man's garments that they might be clearly seen. Having done thus, he went to bed and blew out his candle, fully expecting the coming events to fall out according to his own hopes.

Not long after, the woman came up intending to go to bed with her husband. She undressed herself, and recognizing the clothing on top of one of the beds, believed it to be a sure sign of her husband's being beneath the covers. Not looking at the face, which was purposely hid, she put out her candle and crept into bed.

Though Rumbold at first pretended to be sound asleep, he soon began to stir, and did the lady her right before morning. She, still supposing him to be her husband, gave him full liberty to do what he would.

The wily adventurer, having taken much pain to reap the fruits of his desires, was exceedingly weary. Yet, toward morning he considered that if this matter was discovered, he might have sour sauce added to his sweet meat. Thus he pondered and contrived at length upon how to come off as well as he had come on. Therefore turning to his lovely bedfellow, he kissed her a warm farewell, a kiss she mistook for a promise of something sweeter. Then Rumbold, pretending to rise and make water, went out of bed, found his way to his snoring chamberfellow's bedside, there took up his own clothes, dressed himself, and departed.

The woman, missing her bedfellow—whom all the while she had taken for her husband—wondered what had become of him. She lay in great confusion, knowing not what to do or say. For a while she imagined that she had wronged him. But when she reflected on the fact that her husband was not accustomed to act thus, she began to suspect the truth of what had really befallen her. She was at first sorely troubled, for she could not think of how to remedy the matter. If she should arise and go to the other bed, she might, perchance, be mistaken again. Therefore her confusion grew and she knew not what to do.

Whilst she was in these thoughts, a maid with a candle

darted through the room. In that moment the woman saw clearly that it was indeed her husband in the next bed. Accordingly she resolved to take her clothes and go to his bed. The husband, who had slept soundly all night, suddenly awakened with the noise of the maid dashing in and out. Therefore he took this time to creep out of bed and feel for a chamberpot. At length having found one and used it, he returned to the bed where he had lain. His wife took that opportunity to call him, saying,

"My dear, whither are you going? You mistake your bed."

"What?" asked the man, sorely perplexed. "Where are you?"

"Here!" she cried.

He, hearing her voice soon found out where she was, but could not be persuaded that he had slept there all night.

"You will see bye and bye," said she, "when you see your clothes on this bed. If it be so, then you indeed slept here."

Finally getting him to sleep again, she stole out of bed, got his clothes, brought them back, and then crept beneath the covers once more. When daylight came, he saw them there and was satisfied.

It would have gladdened Rumbold's heart to know that the lady made great inquiry of him on the morrow. But no tidings could be given, for he had flown, and thus ended his amorous adventure of a cold winter's night.

Parr and Jenkins, the Oldest Englishmen Who Ever Lived

Although the Russians claimed that as of 1961 there were more than 500 living Soviet citizens over 120 years old, they offered little supporting evidence. Much evidence, however, supports the claims to longevity of two Englishmen, Thomas Parr and Henry Jenkins. As far as anyone can tell they lived to 152 and 169 respectively.

Parr was born in 1483, the last year of Edward IV's reign. He married his first wife, Jane, when he was 80 years old, and in the course of 30 years she bore him two children. He was apparently somewhat of a gadabout, for when he was 112 he got into trouble with another woman, and, as a result of this incontinent behavior unbefitting his advanced age, was made to do public penance. This tops the ambitions of Eddie Rickenbacker who is said to have once remarked that he would like to be convicted of rape when he is in his late nineties.

As a widower of 120, Parr married his second wife, Catherine, a 52-year-old widow, who bore him one child. Shortly before his 153rd birthday, Parr was brought to Westminster by the Earl of Arundel. There the old man spent most of his time sleeping, but he was visited with considerable interest by many persons. One described him by saying,

"From head to heel, his body had all over a quickset, thickset, natural hairy cover."

He finally died on November 14, 1635, and it was generally believed that "this removal, by taking him from his native air, and the disturbance of much company, hastened his death."

Still, Parr had aroused such interest that the king ordered an autopsy, which revealed that his bodily muscles were healthy, and that the hair on his chest and arms was black. Most amazing of all, his sexual organs were free from any debilitation. When he was buried in Westminster Abbey, he was distinguished as the oldest Englishman who had ever lived.

Thomas Parr's record, however, was overtaken by a man named Henry Jenkins a mere 35 years later. Jenkins' age came to light in a truly remarkable manner. He volunteered to testify as a witness to an incident which had occurred nearly 125 years earlier. The judge became angry; Jenkins, he said, was a scoundrel and a liar. Jenkins countered that he had been butler to a certain Lord Conyers at that time. To prove that Jenkins was giving false testimony, skeptics checked an old register of his lordship's servants, and—to their amazement—found that Henry Jenkins had indeed worked for Lord Conyers 120 years before.

Further proof of the man's age was given by Dr. Tancred Robinson, who later wrote a full account for the Royal Society in London. Jenkins had come to Robinson's sister's kitchen, begging for alms. Recognizing him as the neighbor-

hood's super-centenarian, the doctor asked him how old he was, and Jenkins replied,

"About 162 or 163."

Exceedingly skeptical, the doctor asked him what kings he remembered and what public events he could recall. Jenkins answered, "Henry VIII," and "The fight at Flowden Field."

Not recalling any fight at Flowden Field, Robinson continued with his questioning.

"Was the king there?"

"No," said Jenkins, "he was in France then, but the Earl of Surrey led the troops."

"And how old were you at the time?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, about 12," replied Jenkins after thinking for a moment.

After the old man had gone, Dr. Robinson looked up Flowden Field in an old chronicle and discovered that there had been such a battle 150 years earlier. Furthermore he learned that Henry VIII was in Tourney, France at the time, and the general mentioned in the text was the Earl of Surrey.

What lent credence to Jenkins' word was the fact that he was illiterate and could not possibly have had these facts at his fingertips. He continued to live in the vicinity as a beggar, and finally died in Bolton, Yorkshire, on December 8th, 1670, where he was buried. In 1743 a monument was erected to his memory there as the oldest man who ever lived in England—a record that has never been beaten to date.

Three Fingered Jack, the Black Spartacus of Jamaica

An incredible tale from the West Indies concerns one Mansong, a transplanted African prince who for years terrorized the islands under the odd sobriquet of Three Fingered Jack.

Mansong was born in about 1750 in a West African village called Simbing, just west of Timbuctoo. He was the son of a cattle raiser named Onowauhee. Tall, handsome, and powerful, he learned to fight early in life, to defend his father's property from the raids of Saharan Moors to the north.

Simbing was in the kingdom of Kaarta, and the Kaartans were sick and tired of these Moorish incursions. About 400 of their people per month were being carried off by the Moors and sold as slaves in nearby Bambarra alone. The King of Kaarta demanded that the King of Bambarra return his subjects, but to no avail. The alternative was war.

Mansong fought for Kaarta in this war. His tactical skill and superb leadership earned him an appointment as commander-in-chief; then, when his father died, the king adopted him and betrothed him to his daughter. He was a prince now, soon to be king.

The war grew long and costly, and it came as a welcome development to both sides when mutual peace feelers were extended. Mansong went to the peace conference in Bambarra—and was there betrayed. Having the opposing commander-in-chief in his grasp, the Bambarra king had him drugged, shackled and sold to British slavers who threw him into a pestilential ship bound for Jamaica. It is said, that Mansong killed 19 Bambarrans in his struggles before getting drowsy from the drug.

Had it not been for his powerful constitution and smoldering hatred, he would have died like countless other Negroes did in the tortuous voyage. He, Mansong, had been a general, in time would have ruled a kingdom and owned many slaves. Now he was wallowing in filth. His bitterness turned against the white infidels who held him in captivity. He knew he would never see Kaarta again.

He was sold to the owner of a plantation in eastern Jamaica, at the foot of the Blue Mountains. When he was branded, he swore by Allah that some day he would have his revenge. Week after week he worked from before dawn until after sunset. Floggings were the lot of any black who did not stay rigidly in line, and Mansong, or Jack, as he was now called, received more than his share.

One day as he lay on the ground, writhing beneath the overseer's whip, he made another oath—that for every drop of blood he shed, the blood of a white man would stain the earth.

After that a new Jack appeared—outwardly, at least. He was properly subservient, and showed enough initiative to be trusted with other than menial tasks. Soon he began to find

himself with more free time. He wandered the Blue Mountains, ostensibly looking for game but actually exploring caves and other landmarks.

In his wanderings, he met a fugitive slave who had set himself up as a witch doctor. Amalkir lived in a cave on a mountain peak and shared with Jack a common hatred of their white masters. The two men laid plans for a slave uprising. They cautiously recruited followers and stored arms and supplies in Amalkir's cave.

February 10, 1780, was the date of the rebellion, which was to begin by setting the village of Crawford Town on fire at midnight. In the ensuing confusion the whites were to be massacred.

Unfortunately, though Jack-led slaves did revolt and had Crawford Town ablaze by one A.M., two of them had at the last moment tipped the authorities off. Some 500 troops from nearby Maroontown rushed to the scene and by dawn were chasing the rebels back to the hills.

The rebellion was crushed, and so were Jack's hopes of freedom on his own terms. Surviving slaves accepted an offer of amnesty and returned to their masters—except Jack, who, frustrated and embittered took refuge in Amalkir's cave and brooded over his defeat for days. He came to the conclusion that he could trust no one. From here on he would wage a one-man war against the whites *and* their slaves. It was now Jack against Jamaica.

He armed himself with two pistols, a musket, a cutlass, and as much ammunition as he could carry. Amalkir gave him some African Obeah amulets to hang around his neck, to protect him from evil. Jack, a Moslem, was a disbeliever, but he took the charms anyway, knowing that most of Jamaica's Negroes would be awed by the "magic" and believe him invincible. He would use fear as a weapon if ever he ran out of powder and shot.

On a remote peak called Mount Lebanus, he holed up in a cave even more inaccessible than Amalkir's. Front and rear entrances assured him of ample fresh air and two escape routes. The mouth was virtually invisible from the outside; a nearby spring and an abundance of wild game in the area added to his sense of security.

Within a few weeks Jack raided 13 plantations, killing 57 slaves and running off with foods, rum, blankets, utensils, and arms. No one who had seen him lived to give a description.

He took some time off to hunt. Then, on his next descent from the mountains, he accosted a slave named Quashi, with whom he had worked for the same owner. Quashi was carrying a load of provisions. Jack leaped from the underbrush, but though he had two pistols with him, merely dangled his Obeah charms and demanded the supplies. To his surprise, Quashi resisted. He had become a Christian and was not frightened by the charms; besides, he had his own pistol, which he fired point blank. Jack did not duck quickly enough. The ball struck him in the left hand, carrying off his two last fingers. Quashi did not stop to reload, but fled before Jack could draw and shoot back. Once more "betrayed," the ex-African prince bound his wound so as not to leave a bloody trail, took as much loot as he could carry and scrambled back through the bush to the mountains.

At his plantation, Quashi revealed the identity of the mysterious raider, and boasted of the effect of his single shot. Thus was born the name "Three Fingered Jack."

Jack lay low just long enough for his hand to heal, then renewed his raids, more determined than ever. Often he attacked in broad daylight. He was so successful that both Negroes and many whites began to believe that he was indeed endowed with supernatural powers. Now he was referred to almost everywhere as "Three Fingered Jack, the terror of Jamaica."

Curiously, Negroes regarded him with greater distaste than whites did. Negro women blamed him for all their misfortunes, especially inexplicable pregnancies. But in his own way Jack was a gentleman. Never in his career did he harm a single woman, black or white. Three Fingered Jack had never been a savage.

His chivalry was attested to by, for one, the wife of a white planter. She had to make an emergency trip alone one day on a Blue Mountain road known to be traveled by the infamous black highwayman. On an isolated stretch of this road, she met Jack face to face, but mistook him for "just another Negro." She asked him if he would be kind enough to escort her in case she should encounter Three Fingered Jack. With the greatest of courtesy, Jack saw her to her destination. Nearing it, she offered to pay him. Gruffly, Jack held up his celebrated three-fingered hand and said,

"You see who I am. Put your money away and go in safety."

With that he turned, and disappeared in the opposite direction.

Men who encountered Jack unexpectedly, however, were either killed or maimed with a minimum of conversation. On December 29, 1780, the Jamaica House of Assembly put a price of £100 on Jack's head.

Now, about six months earlier, a young British army officer, Captain John Orford, had arrived in Jamaica with a contingent of troops and soon fell in love with the daughter of a Kingston plantation owner named Chapman. Orford was thus oblivious to Three Fingered Jack's reputation. One day, while hunting game for his girl with his personal servant, a boy named Tucky, Orford had the misfortune to pass directly below the mouth of Jack's Blue Mountain cave. Jack had been watching them narrowly from a ledge above the path. Suddenly he sprang, with a piercing yell. Tucky gaped and fled. Orford whirled, dropped his unloaded musket, and reached for his sword, but Jack landed on his shoulders and crashed a pistol butt down on his head. Then, lifting the stunned Englishman high, he heaved him down the rocky slope.

Tucky found him in a ditch, or no doubt the captain would have died. He had a fractured skull and six broken ribs, and it took him five months to recover. Jack's reputation was enhanced immensely.

Orford's second encounter with Jack came a month after his convalescence, near Morant Bay, where he'd gone on another hunting expedition—this time with his future father-in-law and several other planters. Orford and Tucky wandered off from the rest. Jack, who happened to be hunting nearby himself, heard two men approaching, so hid behind a rock and waited to strike. When he recognized Orford and Tucky, he was determined to do a better job on them this time.

Orford shot a bird which fell within feet of his rock. When Tucky clambered up to fetch it, Jack leaped, grabbed the hapless youth, and unceremoniously threw *him* off the cliff into the bay. Orford heard Tucky's scream, spotted Jack and fired his pistol, which missed. Jack fired back, stunning Orford; then, discarding his musket, he scrambled down to finish the captain off. Orford, though flat on his back and groggy, drew his cutlass, but Jack easily disarmed him.

What possessed him not to kill Orford, no one will ever know, but instead Jack picked him up and imprisoned him in

his cave. A suspect legend has it that Orford's fiancee, Rosa Chapman, disguised as a boy, searched the Blue Mountains, found the cave and nursed him back to health while Jack stood chivalrously by. Somehow, though, Orford eventually escaped and made his way back to Kingston.

Incredibly, Tucky also survived. Nearly drowned, he was pulled from the water by a fishing boat and also made his way back to Chapman's plantation.

The incident exhausted the patience of Governor Dalling. On January 13, 1781, he offered a reward of £200 for Jack's head and another £200 for his body—plus indemnification to the master and freedom to any slave who brought in Jack's left hand.

Two Negroes in particular were determined to collect the prize: a freed slave named Sam Davy, and Quashi, who had been responsible for Jack's nickname. Quashi, after his baptism, was now known as James Reeder. Davy wanted the prize money and Reeder his freedom; they made an ideal team. Since Reeder knew Jack by sight, he was given full cooperation by his current owner. Just before they left for the hills, they were approached by Tucky, who had a personal score to settle with "the terror of Jamaica." The two men agreed to let Tucky join them.

Thanks largely to Tucky's memory, they soon found Jack's cave and waited outside until he emerged. Jack spotted the determined trio almost at the same moment they saw him, and charged with his cutlass swinging. The charge confused them; they could not risk a shot without endangering each other. Taking his advantage, Jack ducked back into his cave and out through the rear entrance.

Reeder took the lead in the ensuing chase. The three bounty-hunters dashed through the dark passageway and came out just in time to see Jack jump from a bluff ten feet to a ledge below.

Tucky drew a pistol from his belt and aimed at the back of Jack's head. Click—a misfire. Davy flung a rock with both hands and dealt Jack a single, sledge hammer blow. He went down without a sound.

Rolling him over they unceremoniously decapitated him and chopped off the celebrated three-fingered hand. There was no triumph, no talk, just a sense of completion. Reeder, still panting, hastily crossed himself.

Regretfully they left Jack's body where it was; it was too

heavy to bring back. The vultures, gathering even now, would soon have a fine feast.

In Jack's cave, they found a bucket of rum, in which they preserved the head and hand for the long trip back to Kingston. When they presented the bucket's grim contents to the authorities they received what had been promised: Reeder and Tucky their freedom, Davy his share of the reward. As for Jack, his head and hand were preserved and placed on public display. Perhaps they were not a fitting memorial. More rightfully, he should have died of old age as the ruler of Kaarta. But this was the way that Mansong did die—as Three Fingered Jack, the terror of Jamaica.

The Great Siberian Mystery

In 1908 Central Siberia was shattered by a fantastic explosion which to this day has not been completely explained. In retrospect the blast had all the earmarks of a nuclear bomb going off. Farmers who were forty miles away were burned by the flash and felled by the shock wave of the explosion. Trees thirty miles away from the center were knocked down. Despite the intensity of the explosion, no one knows exactly what happened because when the smoke cleared there was not even a crater. That eliminated the meteor theory right away. There are no volcanoes in the vicinity. There were no armaments in the area which might have gone off. Most incredible of all are the results of recent investigations which prove that radioactivity in the earth's atmosphere increased noticeably after the Siberian blast. According to a theory advanced by a group of modern scientists, the mysterious detonation may have been caused by a mass of anti-matter from another galaxy accidentally hitting the earth. Anti-matter is the exact opposite of matter, and when the two come into contact they explode violently. Calculations indicate that such an explosion would have released radioactive Carbon-14 into the air, and increased the atmospheric content by approximately seven

percent. Since all of this tallies with the measurable rise of radioactive Carbon-14 in the air following the explosion, the anti-matter theory is the first explanation which has been offered that seems plausible.

The Psychiatrist Who Was Saved by a Madman

Although the August heat of 1792 was as oppressive as usual to the citizens of Paris, the month's end brought with it a cold pall of fear. Revolution at home and war abroad caused ever increasing tension. Rumors bred panic, anger became madness, and rational Parisians turned into beasts of prey.

The most prevalent rumor was that Royalist spies, in league with the advancing Prussian armies, were planning a dreadful uprising. Royalist prisoners were to break out of the dungeons, to arm and then disperse themselves throughout the city. On signal, they were to wreak a horrible vengeance upon Paris, rescue the imprisoned King Louis and his family, then throw the city open to the mercy of the oncoming Prussians.

These preposterous rumors were even taken seriously by Georges Danton, who before the Commune cried out,

"There is a Royal directory which holds secret meetings and corresponds with the Prussian army. To tell you where it assembles, and of whom it is composed, is not in the power of the ministers. But to disconcert it, and to prevent its baneful correspondence with foreigners, *we must—we must strike terror into the Royalists!*"

By August 31st, commerce in Paris was at a standstill, windows were shuttered, doors were barred, and the streets were nearly deserted. Prussian artillery fire from tottering Verdun boomed ominously in the distance. Many had fled the city. But the Royalist prisoners, trapped in their cells, could only tremble helplessly in dread anticipation of the terror Danton had called for.

The fall of Verdun on September 2nd triggered the violence that had been pent up in Paris for so long. The September

massacres began. Murderous bands of bakers, mechanics, draymen and clerks seized makeshift weapons and began searching the streets for counter-revolutionists. During this period of butchery many strange and contradictory episodes occurred, but none to match the amazing chain of events which began on the morning of September 3rd.

Part of the scheme of the bloodthirsty mobs was to invade the city's lunatic asylums and root out Royalist fugitives who might be feigning sickness or insanity. But when they arrived at the Bicetre Hospital, even the Septembrists were aroused to compassion. The clanking of chains and the frenzied shrieks of the inmates were like a page out of Dante's *Inferno*. Naked or in rags, half-starved, they huddled in cold, pitch-black dungeons, wallowing in their own excrement and swarmed over by rats and lice.

Dr. Philippe Pinel, the Bicetre's newly appointed chief physician, described what occurred that day in surprisingly self-contained terms:

"The Brigands," he said, "after the massacres in the prisons, broke like madmen into the above hospital under pretense of emancipating certain victims of the old tyranny, whom they had endeavored to confound with the maniacal residents of that house. They proceeded from cell to cell, interrogating the prisoners, and passing each of them as were manifestly insane. A maniac, bound in chains, arrested their attention by the bitter complaints which he proffered with apparent justice and rationality.

" 'Is it not shameful,' said he, 'that I should be bound in chains and confined with madmen?'

"He defied them to accuse him of any act of impropriety or extravagance.

" 'It is an instance of the most flagrant injustice!'

"He begged the strangers to put an end to such oppression, and to become his liberators. His complaints excited, amongst the armed mob, loud murmurs and imprecations against the governor of the hospital. They immediately sent for that gentleman, and, with their sabres at his breast, demanded an explanation of his conduct. When he attempted to justify himself, they imposed silence upon him . . . they only answered him with abuse; and had it not been for the courage of his wife, who protected him with her own person, he would have been sacrificed to their fury.

"They commanded him to release the maniac, whom they

led in triumph, with reiterated shouts of 'Vive la Republique!' The sight of so many armed men, their loud and confused shouts, and their faces flushed with wine, aroused the madman's fury. He seized with a vigorous grasp the sabre of his next neighbor, brandished it with great violence, and wounded several of his liberators. Had he not been promptly overcome, he would have soon avenged the cause of outraged humanity. The savage mob then thought proper to lead him back to his cell, and, with shame and reluctance, yielded to the voice of justice and experience."

The mob departed from the Bicetre strangely subdued and sobered. Despite what had happened, Pinel then made up his mind to unchain the inmates himself.

Georges Couthon, the director of public safety, was shocked.

"Are you mad yourself to want to unchain these ferocious beasts?" he demanded.

"No," replied Pinel calmly. "I am certain that these wretched beings are violent and crazed only because they are chained. I am convinced that when they no longer are, they will calm themselves and perhaps grow rational."

Couthon remained skeptical. "If you wish to take your life in your hands, it's your own business," he said. "Do as you please."

On the following day Pinel removed the chains from 50 patients. They cried in gratitude and joy. One old man who had lived in darkness and shackles for 18 years wept unrestrainedly on seeing the sunlight again, sobbing repeatedly,

"I have never seen anything so beautiful."

Heartened, Pinel unchained 30 more a few days later. And far from endangering his life, his act of mercy actually saved it. . . .

Some time later Pinel was recognized in the street by a mob of republicans. A rumor had been revived that enemies of the people were being hidden among the insane, and the sight of the Bicetre's chief physician incited the mob to fury. They shouted, "To the lamp posts! String him up!" and with that seized him and dragged him towards the nearest street-lamp, over his frightened protests. Suddenly someone roared angrily from the rim of the crowd. Chevigne, an old soldier of the French Guard, charged headlong into the melee and rescued Pinel just as the rope was being tied around his neck. There were tears in the eyes of both men as they thanked

each other. A great bond existed between them. But for the intervention of Chevigne, Pinel would most surely have been dangling at the end of a rope. Had it not been for Pinel, Chevigne might still have been chained to a dungeon wall. For Chevigne had been one of the first liberated inmates from the Bicetre to regain his health.

The Mystery of the Chevalier d'Eon—Male or Female?

No more intriguing historical controversy exists than that which raged for years over the true sex of an 18th century French diplomat and soldier, Charles d'Eon de Beaumont. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, he was born in 1728 in Burgundy, and christened Charles Geneviève Louise Auguste André Timothée d'Eon. Other sources maintain that he was given the names Charlotte and Augusta. Obviously there was confusion from the very start.

D'Eon was only 5′4″ tall and was reported to have decidedly effeminate features; yet he had bushy eyebrows and wore a prominent beard. He was a great swordsman, hardly a feminine pursuit. Also, he was graduated from the Collège Mazarin as a doctor of law, in those days a further mark of his masculinity.

D'Eon both practiced law and wrote prodigiously. By the time he was 25, he had attracted considerable attention as a political writer, and, brought to the attention of Louis XV by his protector, Louis François, Prince Conti, was promptly appointed by the king to his diplomatic secret service.

The first whispers questioning d'Eon's sex came shortly after this appointment, from the court of Empress Elizabeth in St. Petersburg, Russia. D'Eon had gone there on a diplomatic mission. Whatever gossip-causing incident took place is not recorded, but the mission at least worked out to the advantage of France, for the king kept d'Eon in his service.

The chevalier distinguished himself so well during a second mission to Russia that he was awarded the Grand Cross of St.

Louis. In 1759, he fought bravely on the battlefield as a captain of dragoons and, in 1762, was appointed to another diplomatic post in London. When a new ambassador, the Comte de Guerchy, took over in London, a strange fate befell d'Eon. De Guerchy was his mortal enemy. Before long the chevalier found himself losing favor with the king, largely, he believed, through scandalous rumors spread about him by the influential Madame de Pompadour. What were those rumors? Again, it is difficult to say. But it is known that one of Louis XV's daily pastimes was to read his spies' detailed accounts of his subjects' sex lives. In this manner, Louis not only satisfied his voyeuristic desires but learned many nonsexual secrets as well. It is quite possible that, coupled with la Pompadour's charges, he read a confidential report concerning the chevalier's sex.

In any case, during d'Eon's feud with de Guerchy, he charged the count with attempting to poison him. The allegation was true, but d'Eon had lost Louis' backing and ended up being found guilty of libel. Outlawed in his native France, he had no choice but to remain in England.

In London, the chevalier soon became a familiar figure in his red, green, and silver dragoon officer's uniform. In 1771 rumors about his sex began to spread again. Wealthy Englishmen made bets on whether he was a man or a woman. Brokers and underwriters became involved as the wagering mushroomed.

In 1774 d'Eon published a book in Amsterdam entitled *Les Loisirs du Chevalier d'Eon,* certain sections of which added fuel to the controversy. The bets increased and the stakes rose higher. D'Eon himself for a while ignored the whole matter as being extremely distasteful, but before long the betting had become so widespread that he placed an ad in a London newspaper warning the bettors and brokers against taking undue chances with their money. He said he would not be at all surprised if unscrupulous individuals did not contact those in France who had "perfect knowledge" of his sex, strictly for purposes of taking unfair advantages in the wagering. However, he neither denied nor confirmed a single statement regarding his gender. When a banker named Treves, offered to pay him £1,000 for visual proof of whatever it might be, d'Eon was outraged. He denied being in collusion with any of the bettors, and offered to give everything he possessed to charity if anyone could prove such a slanderous accusation.

By 1777 the stakes had risen to such ridiculous heights that they became the subject of lawsuits involving a total of about £300,000. During the test case, *Hayes vs Jacques*, a physician named Louis le Goux swore that he had given the chevalier a physical examination and that "she was indeed a woman." A newspaper man named de Morande also claimed to have been given absolute proof that d'Eon was a female. De Morande told how he had once visited d'Eon and had been permitted to examine "her" wardrobe, which consisted for the most part of feminine wearing apparel. Furthermore, to the delight of the spectators in court, the witness confided that he had actually seen "her" bare bosom. Finally he said that he had been allowed to come over to d'Eon's bed where the chevalier gave him "manual proof of her being in truth a woman."

The trial created a sensation both in England and on the continent. Mr. Hayes, the plaintiff, won his suit. We might assume, therefore, that it had been proven that the chevalier was not a man at all, and that the case was closed. But there was a catch. All testimony, despite swearings and oaths, was hearsay. D'Eon never once appeared naked in court to settle the question in the only way possible. Reacting characteristically, d'Eon commented,

"What does it matter to me that the King's Bench has proclaimed me to be a female! I am none the better or worse."

Then, a little over a month later, d'Eon appeared publicly in female dress. Could this merely have been a move calculated merely to confuse everyone? No one can say. In any event the chevalier created quite a stir by going out in an elegant gown and startling, diamond-studded headdress. In another turnabout, upon debarking for Paris sometime later, d'Eon was dressed again in the familiar dragoon officers uniform. Once again he published a cryptic message in the newspapers. Although he did not categorically state that he was either male or female, he blasted bettors, brokers, judges and lawyers. He let it be known that in his opinion they had all become embroiled in a matter which was nobody's business but his own. He said in part,

"I would rather perish than be triumphant from the weakness of the sex imputed to me. I have never made use of ought but my quality of Captain of Dragoons to combat my enemies when they have had the heart. How sad for me to have had to do, since my misfortunes in England, with a set of avaricious wretches and poltroons. My sex was never inquired into when

I was sent to fight and negotiate with the enemies of my country. I am always *unus et idem*." *

D'Eon's return to France was conditional upon the surrender of certain state documents in his possession, which he had previously refused to give up, and secondly that he abandon the garb of a man and dress as a woman. The latter, a specific order signed by Louis XV, could explain the mysterious public appearance in female attire prior to his departure from England. It may well have been a signal that he was prepared to return from exile and face the future in his native country. In any event, when the embattled chevalier first returned, he refused to dress as a woman. For this he was imprisoned for a month. Finally bowing to the pressure of the Royal edict, d'Eon retired to the family estate in Burgundy as *Mademoiselle* d'Eon.

The story does not end quite so simply. This development had a marked effect upon the legal situation in London. The lawsuits erupted again. The supporters of d'Eon's womanhood rallied and demanded money. The Lord Chief Justice, who had come to regard the entire d'Eon controversy as a travesty against the decorum of the courts, finally threw all the litigants out for good, under a parliamentary act which invalidated all wagers involving any individual which could not be conclusively settled by absolute proof. Since d'Eon was the only one who could provide that proof, and d'Eon did not come forth, the legal aspect of the matter, in England at least, was settled.

Although living in retirement of sorts, d'Eon was far from inactive. The "lady" often seemed far from feminine; she not only refused to wear high heels but was under deep suspicion of shaving daily. She even talked openly of raising a regiment of French volunteers to fight on the side of the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

Bad days came upon the chevalier with the French Revolution. Her royal annual pension of 12,000 livres stopped abruptly. Continuing to dress as a woman, d'Eon was given permission to return to London for the purpose of converting property there to cash. As a distinguished French emigré, she (as d'Eon was always referred to now) could have received charity from sympathetic Britons. Instead she auctioned off her property and became a professional fencer, touring the country and putting on exhibitions. A female fencing expert

* One and the same.

of such outstanding skill was a curiosity, and attracted good crowds.

In 1796, d'Eon was badly wounded during the match, and as a result had to give up the foil and the épée permanently. Cut off from any further means of earning a living d'Eon began gathering material for an autobiography. It was generally believed that she was living on a small pension from George III. The controversial chevalier finally died on May 22, 1810. A close friend, Mrs. Mary Cole, was called to lay out the body. When she discovered that her old friend's remains appeared to be those of a man, she collapsed in deep shock. Upon revealing the news of her upsetting discovery to friends, a post mortem examination was ordered.

Accordingly, two days later, two doctors, a professor of anatomy, a notary, and several friends gathered solemnly for the examination. The chevalier was found to have full breasts, a body quite feminine in general appearance, except for one vital difference. The body was found to possess "the visible organs of generation of a male." The mystery was finally solved. The Chevalier d'Eon had been one of those rare, and truly tragic figures, a genuine hermaphrodite.

"Greek Roulette"

According to the Greek grammarian, Athenaeus, the Thracians of his day occasionally indulged in a deadly game during drinking parties which was very similar to Russian Roulette. It was called "The Game of Hanging," and was played as follows: a noose was made at the end of a rope which was attached to a high place in the banquet hall. Beneath it was placed a large rock that could be rolled away easily. The participants then cast lots for the purpose of determining who would play first. When the player was chosen, he took a sickle in one hand and stood upon the rock, while his friends attached the noose around his neck. At a given signal the rock was rolled from under his feet and it was up to the unaided

victim to cut the rope which suspended him. If he was fast enough he would survive. If not, he slowly strangled to death as his companions laughed in drunken uproariousness, regarding his demise as a mordant joke.

The Curious Story of How Iceland Was Named

Just below the Arctic Circle in the midst of a cold, empty stretch of North Atlantic Ocean lies Iceland. Its total area is approximately 39,709 square miles, about the same size as Kentucky. From its name and location, one would expect Iceland to be the last spot in the world anyone could possibly want to live. But, since the island is also surrounded by the warm current of the Gulf Stream, and due to an intricate underground network of natural steam heat, the temperature in winter rarely drops below the freezing point. Thereon hangs our tale.

Even today, when Iceland is mentioned, one is likely to ask if there are any Eskimos there. Some years ago, a pretty female Icelander remarked that she had seen an Eskimo once, but that the Eskimo was only visiting, having come over from Greenland.

This mistaken impression that so many outsiders have about this sub-arctic land is no accident. It is due in part to a deliberate action on the part of some forgotten, ancient Norwegian psychologist. For his motive, we must look back to somewhere in the neighborhood of 870 A.D., when King Harald Fairhair became dictator of Norway and the nobility began a mass emigration to Iceland.

Now, Iceland is not icy at all. That is the crux of the matter. As the tiny country was being settled, outland colonists lived a precarious existence. On the one hand was an ever present danger of attack by Viking raiders, the most bloodthirsty gang of barbarians ever to sail the seven seas, so ferocious that the horns protruding from their helmets were often believed to have grown out of their heads. A

second threat came from North African pirates, no mean navigators themselves, who occasionally made forays along the Scandinavian coasts. The settlers had enough to worry about just getting their new community going, without having to be bothered defending themselves every month or so from invaders.

A conference among the emigrant nobles probably went very much along the following lines:

Olafur, the chairman, speaks first: "Well, gentlemen, we have settled on this warm and pleasant island. The problem now is to keep it to ourselves, and to prevent as far as possible any invasions from pirates or hostile Vikings."

Gudmund, a popular hero, speaks next. "That is a good point, my friend. But our task will not be any easy one. Perhaps if we give this island a forbidding name it might keep unwelcome visitors away."

A young composer of epic sagas, a dreamer with a sharp imagination named Tor, jumps to his feet and flashes, "I have it! You all know of the great icy land to the north, that great empty expanse covered with glaciers, and swept by dismal, howling storms?"

"Aye," reply the others. "We know it well."

"As you know," continued Tor, "neither the cold place to the north, nor our own little island have been named. Let us use a trick. Let us name both places. The land of ice and storms, we shall call "Greenland," and our home we shall call "Iceland." Thus, when pirates or Vikings hear the two names they will seek Greenland at once. When they find nothing there but frozen wastes, great deserts of jagged ice, and black stormy skies, they will say, 'If this accursed place be Greenland, how fearful must be the one known as Iceland. Let us hasten whence we came ere we perish!' "

The others are delighted and they propose toasts to Tor, the man with vision. Then Olafur raises his hand and addresses the meeting once more,

"Verily, as Tor has spoken, so shall it be done. In the name of all the gods, we declare this fair place to be Iceland!"

Although the preceding fragment may not be quite historically accurate, it conveys the spirit of the idea. Iceland originally was so named for the express purpose of frightening away invaders, and though it served admirably in the past, the only thing it seems to be doing today is to keep away the tourist trade.

Those Incredible Ancient "Modern Inventions"

So many devices believed to be modern go back hundreds, even thousands of years, that we must ask ourselves from time to time if there is really anything new at all? Judging by what our predecessors accomplished, all we can safely say about our own scientists is that they have for the most part done an excellent job of refining, polishing, and applying.

Hero of Alexandria, a Greek who lived in the first century B.C., invented automated dancing figures, self-operating doors, self-pouring water vessels, an automatic water distributor, and a wind organ. All of these startling creations were actually used. Some operated on steam, air, or water, others on mechanisms utilizing pulleys, wheels, and counterweights. Hero's most incredible device, however, was called a terrestrial hodometer. It measured speed, and consisted of a box containing an intricate series of reduction gears. Our modern taxi meters are nothing more than an application of this 2000-year-old invention.

The German, Johannes Gutenberg, is often mistakenly credited with the invention of printing. Actually he was the first European to find a practical method of mass printing through the use of moveable type. The Romans used block printing as far back as the third century B.C., and a process called xylography, or printing from engraved wooden plates, was used by Europeans in the tenth Century A.D. A Chinese, Pi Sheng, invented a moveable type back in 1041, but he fashioned his characters of clay. They were perishable and not very good at retaining ink. The Turks also developed moveable type about 200 years later. They went a step further, experimenting with tin, wood, and terra cotta, but encountered a problem similar to that of Pi Sheng. Their type did not hold ink efficiently. Thus it was not until Gutenberg succeeded in the middle of the 15th century that printing as we know it today was really launched. But it must be added that

at approximately the same time, about 1450, the Koreans also developed a satisfactory metal moveable type, thereby simultaneously introducing printing in the Far East.

Many today marvel at the insides of a clock or watch, thinking, "My, what a monument to modern technology." A monument to man's ingenuity, yes, to modern technology no. Extremely accurate time-measuring devices abounded in the ancient world; less accurate ones existed in pre-historic times.

One of the earliest clocks, as we know them today, was built into the tower of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, in 1286. It required continual maintenance by a full-time attendant whose salary was a daily allowance of bread and beer. A major breakthrough in clocks came in the 16th century when Galileo invented the pendulum clock, so ideal a design that it has been retained to the present day. The first alarm clocks were constructed in that same century, and one account describes a small eight-day watch that belonged to England's Henry VIII. Many 16th century originals are still in everyday use, keeping good time. Whether our twentieth century timepieces will hold up as well remains to be seen.

The 16th century also gave birth to some fantastic if less practical devices, the precursors of modern automation without benefit of electricity. Leonardo da Vinci constructed a robot lion in honor of Louis XII's arrival in Milan. It approached the king by itself, made an obeisance, then opened its chest and revealed a splendid coat of arms bearing three fleur de lys. Toward the end of the century, a German mechanic, Christopher Schissler, fashioned a free-moving automatic doll. Shortly afterwards, a watchmaker named Achilles Langenbucher built a number of self-playing musical instruments for which he was awarded honors.

Even more magnificent robots were built in the 18th century. In 1738 Jacques Vaucanson, best known for his invention of a mechanical loom, designed some intricate, ingenious, and thoroughly workable automatons which held all Paris spellbound, one a life-sized, humanoid flutist that played twelve complete tunes with precision. Vaucanson's crowning achievement was a mechanical duck. It looked alive. It walked, swam, flapped its wings, and preened its feathers. Most fantastic of all, it ate, drank, digested and eliminated food. It survived its inventor by many years, and although it suffered the normal ravages of time, it was seen by Goethe, who described it in 1805, and finally came into the possession of a famous magician 40 years later.

Two other famous 18th century robot-makers were a Swiss father and son, Pierre and Henri-Louis Droz. Pierre alone made a multi-geared child called The Scrivener, which dipped a pen in ink, shook it twice, then wrote the words, "Welcome to Neuchatel." Together the father and son constructed a second, even more capable robot in 1773, called The Draughtsman. Much like its predecessor, it was a delicate, child-like figure seated at a small desk. In classical style it drew several sketches, beginning with an outline, adding the shading later. During its performance, it raised its hand occasionally, and moved its eyes. This mechanical figure seemed so alive that the father was indicted and tried for witchcraft, but due to the growing disbelief in sorcery at the time, he was acquitted.

The most celebrated robot of the 18th century was called The Turk. It was man-sized, wore a Turkish costume and sat behind a large box, on the top of which was an inlaid chessboard. The Turk challenged all comers. Whenever he displayed it, its owner, Baron von Kempelen, always opened the box from several angles, revealing a complicated maze of wheels, gears, pistons, springs, levers, and drums. The Turk usually won the game. It was shown all over Europe and in America. Many guesses were made as to how it worked, and fraud was often charged. It was alleged for example, that a midget hid in the box and manipulated the chessmen. Once it was reported that a Pole desirous of assassinating Empress Catherine of Russia hid inside, planning to fire the fatal shot after the game began. According to the story, the Czarina learned of the plot, pretended to be insulted by an act of The Turk and ordered it shot, thereby eliminating her would-be killer. Whatever the truth behind the indefatigable robot, it enjoyed a long and interesting career.

We must return to the late 15th and early 16th century for a brief look at the most prolific and brilliant inventor of all times, Leonardo da Vinci. Within a few decades, da Vinci designed the first self-propelled car, tank, armored warship, diving helmet, helicopter, parachute, machine gun, and a startlingly modern looking steam-powered cannon. Not all left the drawing board, but models built recently to Leonardo's plans as a rule proved perfectly workable. He also designed and built (among other things) advanced musical instruments,

tool making machines, a hydraulic pump, a rope-twisting machine, a dredge, and the forerunner of the modern automobile jack. All these were used in his lifetime.

Some may still try to belittle these monumental accomplishments of the past by pointing to the giant computers of today. Even these are not so new in concept. The first mechanical computer worked perfectly. It was only 14 inches long, five inches high, and three-and-a-half inches wide. It performed mathematical calculations of all kinds and was built by the philosopher Blaise Pascal in 1645, all of which proves that there is very little new under the sun.

Justice Gone Mad

Despite his unquestioned superiority over all other creatures, man too often has behaved with proportionate stupidity, especially in the field of law. For instance, during the thirteenth and fourteenth century in France there are numerous instances of animals being arrested, tried, and executed for alleged crimes. A sow condemned to die for murder in Falaise, in 1386 not only stood trial, but was dressed in human attire for her execution. A few years before this, a bull which had gored a man to death in Moisy was tried, convicted and hanged. But that was not the end of the matter. The case was appealed and the verdict upheld. Pheasants, driven by countless superstitious beliefs, were always getting into trouble. Roosters, for instance, were actually believed capable of laying eggs. Of course, such eggs were not ordinary, they were products of evil. If allowed to hatch they would produce basilisks, or deadly, winged serpents. Naturally, they had to be destroyed. Thus we find an old record in the town of Bâle, telling us that in the month of August, 1474, an "abandoned and profligate cock" was charged with the abominable crime of laying an egg. The shameless fellow was arrested along with his fearful ovoid progeny, and both were burned in the public square. Living creatures were not the only ones to

suffer serious punishments, however. Once an apple orchard was excommunicated by a priest because he saw children playing there and eating fruit when they should have been in church. The ban apparently proved effective, for the orchard is said to have stopped bearing fruit until the dowager duchess of Burgundy prevailed on the priest to remove the interdict.

Tumbolin, India's Legendary Bandit Queen

For centuries the word *Dacoit* was synonymous with terror in India. Like the dreaded *Thugs,* who worshipped Kali, the goddess of plague, destruction, and death, the Dacoits were kidnappers, murderers, and thieves. But unlike the Thugs, they had no religious inspiration for their crimes and were in business strictly for profit.

Dacoits worked in well-knit teams of at least five, roaming the countryside and choosing their prey at will. They were masters of disguise, sometimes appearing as pilgrims, other times as beggars, but more often as mourners. The huge funeral throngs so common in India made ideal hiding places, and the ritual bags of animal bones carried by mourners could easily be used to advantage. The Dacoits would carve and carry detachable bone handles for the dagger blades or spearheads hidden in the folds of their clothing.

Some bands of Dacoits were successfully led by women, the most celebrated of which was a widow from the kingdom of Oudh named Tumbolin. Tumbolin lived around the middle of the 19th century. Married to a bandit chieftain, she was recognized by the gang as a clever behind-the-scenes strategist and administrator until her husband was killed in a raid in Madras. Tumbolin immediately took over the reins of leadership, with the band's full approval.

Business improved noticeably. Tumbolin chose a man named Himtya as her chief lieutenant and led the Dacoits in raids that never failed. She was eager, ferocious, but as shrewdly calculating as a mathematician. She always accompanied her men, riding ahead on a sleek piebald pony, but as she was

slight and recognized this limitation, never engaged in any actual fighting. During hand-to-hand combat, it was Himtya's saber that flashed at the head of the band.

Tumbolin's most celebrated feat was an assault on a British Army outpost in Sholapore, in the district of Hyderabad. She and her band were camped at Nuldroog, 15 miles from the British stronghold, when they learned that it sheltered a flourishing commercial center within its boundaries.

For a week the Dacoits, disguised as wandering minstrels, studied every square foot of the area. So successful was their cover that within a day after their arrival they were allowed to move about with no restrictions. They serenaded the officers' bungalows while estimating the strength of the garrison and eavesdropping on local gossip. They even wandered in and out of the general's garden unhindered by sentries posted there 24 hours a day.

It soon became evident to Tumbolin that she had an ideal set-up. First, the bank was not under heavy guard, for the British presence in the general area was considered safety enough. The garrison consisted of sepoys, or native infantry, and European cavalry, plus a number of high civilian administrators. But even more desirable than the bank's loot was a treasure presently in the hands of the army and about to be convoyed to the coast. It was locked in a formidable, double-compartmented tumbril under constant guard.

Although the treasure was much tougher to take than the bank, Tumbolin decided to take a chance on it anyway. Her skin would be in danger, but the prestige that beckoned for outwitting the British was irresistible.

Tumbolin planned the strike for after dark. Each man was given a specific assignment, plus an alternate should one become necessary. Towards dusk on the appointed day, it was duly noted that the treasure was in the right-hand compartment of the tumbril just before the sentry change. Shortly after sunset the Dacoits began creeping into the military compound. Himtya's group sneaked up to the doors of a barracks and locked in the off-duty sepoy troops. Meanwhile, four other bandits crept through the shadows to the tumbril, noiselessly speared the sentries, and stood guard as still another team grunted and strained at the padlock. It was strong, unyielding steel. They were unable to force it open without making a considerable clatter.

Two distant sentries heard the noise and came running to

investigate. They found the Dacoits feverishly at work on the lock and opened fire, which aroused the entire garrison. British officers leaped from the nearest cottages, seized shotguns, and pumped shells at the lockbreakers, who didn't budge from their task until the lock was broken. Then they jumped aside, grabbed their rifles and began returning the increasing gunfire. Other Dacoits galloped up on ponies with saddlebags and reached into the compartment to get the treasure. But it was empty. What they had failed to discover was that after the treasure was locked in one compartment each night, in full sight of anyone who might be watching, it was deftly transferred at dusk under cover of the sentry change.

It was now too late to do anything but clear out. Far off, a bugler was blowing the general call to arms, and the minnie balls were whistling close.

Following their alternative plan, the Dacoits split and fled back to camp as fast as they could, with the British hot on their heels. At Nuldroog they joined the rest of the band and rode all night until they crossed the River Kistna, where they were beyond pursuit.

As Tumbolin had anticipated, this defiant exploit did such wonders for her reputation that it more than compensated for the failure to get the treasure. For days the chagrined British combed the adjacent countryside, and when the commanding officer reported the affair to London, his dispatch stated that the attack had been made by "numerous well-armed bandits." As far as he knew he was telling the truth.

Actually, Tumbolin had accomplished her mission with only 16 men.

About ten years later, Tumbolin carried out her second most daring raid, in the city of Poona, near Bombay. With characteristic planning, she attacked while the chief of police was getting married. As she had expected, the entire force was present at the festivities, and her men were able to rob the strongbox room of a wealthy Marawaree merchant. The tumult eventually interrupted the police chief's wedding party, and it is to his credit that his men succeeded in capturing two of Tumbolin's band, one of whom was Himtya.

Unlike the majority of others in her profession, Tumbolin retired and settled down among her people in the kingdom of Oudh, where she eventually died of old age. Few Dacoit leaders were ever able to match her daring achievements afterwards.

The Doctor Who Killed the Corpse

One night in 1862, a young Parisian physician had the most ghastly experience of his life. He had an appointment on the following day to give a patient a thorough physical examination, and to brush up on a few anatomical details he decided toward evening to visit the dissecting room of the hospital. It was his intention to open the abdomen of a cadaver and study certain of the viscera.

He arrived at the hospital after nightfall. Candle in hand, he entered the dissecting room and found the naked body of a woman stretched out on the slab. She had been an indigent mental patient who had died the day before, and whose remains were to be used for the purposes of study. Placing his candle on her chest in order to give himself the maximum amount of illumination, he took a scalpel and made a vertical incision down the middle of the abdomen.

Suddenly the "corpse" emitted an ear-splitting scream, then sprang up to a sitting position, causing the candle to fall on the floor and go out. The startled doctor didn't even get a chance to bend over and pick it up. At that instant a cold, clammy hand seized him by the hair while another clawed at his face with long, sharp fingernails. Desperately he tried to wriggle free, twisting first in one direction, then in the other. He could feel warm trickles of blood running down his face. His hair felt as though it would be torn from his head. From the pain, pitch blackness, and shock, he began to panic and struck out blindly with the scalpel he still clutched in his right hand. He hit something soft and yielding. A shuddering sigh followed, then the grip on his hair loosened—the last thing he remembered before passing out.

When he regained consciousness, sunlight was flooding the room. The doctor's first impression was that he lay in a pool of blood, but as his senses returned, he realized that there was less of it than he might have expected. Picking himself up he

saw that he had been lying on the floor alongside the contorted corpse of the woman. The eyes and mouth were open, and the face was frozen in an expression of horror. Protruding from the blood-smeared abdomen was the scalpel which had penetrated the heart. Cleaning everything up quickly and as thoroughly as he could, he replaced the body on the table and left, thoroughly unnerved. Years later he wrote anonymously of his experience in the newspaper, *Figaro*, saying,

" . . the recollection of this event fills me with horror, and the marks which the nails of that insane woman left upon my face are still there."

Dabney, the Clothes-line Spy

Dabney was what pre-Civil War southern slave advertisements called "a smart, likely negro fellow." In the spring of 1836, accompanied by his wife, he stole his master's best horse and made a spectacular dash from rebel Virginia to the north bank of the Rappahannock River—and freedom. He found immediate employment as a cook and general helper with the Army of the Potomac, commanded by General Joseph Hooker. A buildup of the Union forces was underway when Dabney arrived, and the whole encampment bustled with activity.

Busiest of all were the scouts, who constantly scurried back and forth, trying to gain information about Confederate movements across the river. Incredible as it may seem, one of the most ingenious communication systems of the Civil War was devised here by this former slave.

Shortly after his arrival it became clear to Dabney's new employers that his general abilities were going completely to waste. To begin with, he possessed a remarkably clear knowledge of the entire region's topography and its inhabitants. In addition he was alert, intelligent, and devoted to the Federal cause.

His initial accomplishment led not only to promotion, it proved to be General Hooker's cleverest source of informa-

tion. It was accurate, instantaneous, and thoroughly baffling to the enemy.

When Dabney first observed the army signalmen in action he was fascinated with their manipulation of semaphore flags. He was particularly intrigued with the visual system of communication. He begged the signalmen to explain everything to him, and largely to alleviate their off-duty boredom, they did so. Dabney absorbed so much information that he soon knew as much about enemy troop movements as the General Staff.

Not long afterwards, Dabney's wife asked for permission to go back across the river as servant to a "Secesh woman" General Hooker was about to send to her rebel friends. Although it seemed an odd request, Hooker allowed the Negro woman to go; then promptly forgot about the whole matter.

Within a few days Mrs. Dabney was installed as laundress at Confederate headquarters in Fredericksburg. Before long, Dabney, on the north bank of the river, became startlingly well informed about all the current rebel military activities. Within an hour of any projected troop movement General Hooker was fully aware of it. He knew which corps was moving, or about to move. He knew the direction of the march, how many men were in each unit; in short, he had an accurate picture of what the enemy was doing. The amazing part was that every bit of this detailed intelligence came from Dabney. To heighten the riddle, Dabney was never absent, he never spoke to any of the scouts, and he always appeared to be thoroughly occupied with his duties as cook and groom.

For a long time how he obtained his information remained a mystery to the General and his staff, no matter how they tried to unravel it. Finally, one of the officers decided to resort to the most direct method. He began to ask questions. At first he met with no success, but finally his patience was rewarded. Taking the officer to a high bluff which afforded them a clear view of Fredericksburg, Dabney indicated a tiny cabin on the outskirts of town, near the riverbank. Then, pointing his finger, he said,

"You see that clothesline? Well, that tells me in half an hour just what goes on at Lee's headquarters. . . . you see, my wife over there—she washes for the officers, and cooks, and hangs around—and as soon as she hears about any movements, or anything going on, she comes down and moves the clothes on the line so I can understand it."

The officer was amazed, and Dabney went calmly on,

"That there gray shirt," he said, "is Longstreet. When she takes it off the line it means he's gone down about Richmond. That white shirt means Hill, and when she moves it to the west end of the line, it means his corps has moved upstream. That red one is Stonewall, he's down on the right now, and if he moves, why she'll just move that old red shirt."

Now that the truth was known Dabney was treated with genuine respect. When this Negro talked, "Fighting Joe" Hooker listened. A few days later, a signal officer, observing the clothesline through his field glasses, noticed a considerable shifting among the rebel army flannels. Unable to make any sense of it, he called Dabney who came on the double. Looking through the glasses, Dabney let loose with a long, meaningful whistle.

"For heaven's sake, man, what's going on?" demanded the officer.

"You see those two blankets pinned together at the bottom?"

"Yes, what about them?"

"Why," said Dabney, "that's her way of makin' a fish trap, and when she pins the clothes together like that, it means Lee is only trying to draw us into an ambush."

Not only were many lives saved by avoiding Lee's bait, but for as long as the two armies faced each other, similar traps were avoided. And Dabney, with his clothesline telegraph, continued to be one of General Hooker's most effective sources of intelligence. His detailed information was certainly responsible for the Union Army's superior tactical position immediately before the battle of Chancellorsville. Later, after winning his non-commissioned officer's stripes as a scout, this former slave's skill and courage won him the highest regard of those with whom he served—as a man, as a soldier, and as a fellow American.

One Man's Meat . . .

A keen observer of man's paradoxical nature once shrewdly remarked, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink." The Scotch who dote on Haggis, Black pudding, Sheep's head, and tripe or the English whose mouths water at the thought of roast ungutted woodcock often grow pale at the thought of eating snails, frog legs, or mountain oysters. The Germans, once so fond of horsemeat, could never convince their neighbors of that dish's virtues. In a number of western countries, notably France, *Felis libyca domestica,* or the common cat, has all too often been served up as rabbit. In the far east dogs and rats have kept millions of people from starvation over the centuries. There have been instances in Spain of scraps of gloves and glue boiled in garlic being served for dinner. The Javanese once considered fresh animal hides to be the most succulent of delicacies. And according to one account, the first pair of buckskin breeches ever seen in the South Sea Islands were so misunderstood that after being stuffed with seaweed, they were boiled and served as a meal. Indeed, there are few fauna or flora that have escaped the omnivorous appetite of *Homo Sapiens*—including *Homo Sapiens*. Aside from the better known oddities of cuisine such as grasshoppers, grubs, and bumblebees, man has been known to nourish himself on anteaters, bats, pickled puffins, lions, tigers, monkeys, porcupines, parrots, and jaguars. Eighteenth century Guatemalan Indians believed that eating live lizards cured cancer, and the Swedes have been known to flavor brandy with ants. Moths, caterpillars, cicadas, spiders, and insect egg caviar have all been enjoyed in one part of the world or another by that curious creature called man. All of which goes to prove that even today most people are relatively ignorant of how the other half lives.

The Miracle that Saved Fort Sumter from Destruction

Fort Sumter never had a chance. It was deliberately sold down the river before the first shot was ever fired. John B. Floyd, whose treachery made this possible, was in an ideal position to carry out his scheme, for he was Secretary of War of the United States.

An ardent secessionist, Floyd perverted his high rank in order to deliver the Federal property in Charleston into the hands of the nation's enemies. Moreover, by taking great pains to consummate his plans without the expenditure of lives or money, he succeeded where a bolder move would have failed. Floyd's success was partially impeded, however, by the intervention of a loyal officer, Colonel John L. Gardner, commandant of the Federal garrison at Fort Moultrie.

At the time, Fort Sumter was still under construction, and Gardner, fully aware of the impending crisis, begged futilely for reinforcements and supplies. Instead, the wily Floyd dispatched laborers, who, under the direction of a Southern engineer, were ordered to repair Fort Moultrie in such a manner as to render it defenseless. The plan was subtle and unobtrusive. The laborers were to be fed from the supplies on hand at the fort, making it necessary to purchase provisions in Charleston from week to week. Thus, in the event of an attack, the fort could be effectively starved out in a few days.

Gardner was uncomfortably aware of his dilemma and furthermore suspected that the Secretary of War was responsible for it. Ignoring protocol, he wrote a letter to a Colonel Taylor, a friend in the commissary department in Washington, requesting provisions to maintain 100 men for six months. Gardner hinted broadly that this extraordinary request be handled in a routine manner, without consulting the Secretary of War. Lastly he suggested that the supply ship unload her cargo at Fort Moultrie before berthing at Charleston. Fortunately

Colonel Taylor understood the implications, and the operation was carried out successfully without Floyd's knowledge.

But the Secretary had not been idle. He sent a young officer to Fort Moultrie to spy and make certain that his plans were being executed. Discouragingly for Floyd, the spy's communique described accurately all of Colonel Gardner's preparations to defend the fort at all costs. It even noted how the colonel had been adding to the existing fortifications wherever possible. For example, even the brick quarters within the enclosure were loopholed for a stand with musketry, in case of a sudden charge. It was quite obvious that Gardner was doing his job too well. Then and there Floyd decided to play his trump card.

Colonel Gardner was immediately transferred and the command was turned over to a Kentucky-born officer who was married to a prominent Georgia woman. Floyd reasoned, not too illogically, that a man with such background and connections would be a pliant tool. There was only one flaw; Floyd had not taken the man himself into consideration. Major Robert Anderson, though a Southerner to the core, was a man who held honor and duty above all else. He had spent almost 40 years in the service of the United States of America, and the only thing he was willing to sacrifice was his own life.

But though Anderson continued Gardner's good work, the damage to Fort Moultrie was beyond repair. A little time had been gained, but suddenly, on December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union, cutting Anderson and his men off from any help in the heart now of hostile territory. The major knew his vulnerability all too well. The tiny garrison was critically below strength. Reinforcements and supplies were destined never to arrive. Still, Anderson had only one course open: until he received orders to the contrary, he was pledged to defend his post to the best of his ability.

As a former gunnery instructor at West Point, Anderson knew he could not save Fort Moultrie itself against attack, but there was a slim chance for survival if he could evacuate and entrench himself behind the thick, heavy masonry of Fort Sumter, three-and-a-half miles out in the harbor. So throughout the bleak night of December 26th, under the cover of darkness, the major had every man at Fort Moultrie spike cannons and load their meager stores into engineers' boats.

The night was bitter cold, the work hushed and feverish, but at exactly noon on December 27, 1860, the exhausted

evacuees stood proudly at attention as the Stars and Stripes were raised over Fort Sumter. As the colors unfurled in the breeze, the chaplain knelt and prayed for support, encouragement and mercy. Then, after the earnest "Amen" of the troops, the band broke out with *Hail Columbia*, and the entire company cheered.

Although the garrison was now in a far better position than it had been, it still had serious problems. It had barely enough manpower to provide crews for the guns. Secondly, construction at Sumter had never been finished. Neither of the two magazines, for example, were completed, and there was only enough ammunition to fill one of them. Later, however, it was this piece of seemingly bad luck that helped save the fort from total annihilation. The officer who discovered the shortage asked Major Anderson which of the two magazines should be used. As Anderson later commented:

"Thinking there was no choice, or perhaps, not having any special reason, I assigned the one to be occupied. I afterwards discovered that the one so taken was the most exposed. In a word, it was a moral certainty that if I had first examined the two, I should *not* have ordered the occupancy of the one I did."

The ammunition was duly stowed away, and the small, heroic band waited uneasily for the next development. Food was their greatest concern. They could hold out for about three months without starving. Beyond that, no one cared to speculate, and as it happened, there was no need. On April 11, 1861, when enough food was left for two or three days at the most, the suspense ended. Two Confederate representatives, Colonel Chesnut and Captain Lee, brought to Sumter a formal demand for surrender from General Beauregard. Anderson politely declined the terms, and on that note the two Southern officers returned to Charleston.

For the rest of the day Fort Sumter prepared for the impending attack. As the hours passed slowly by, the sea became more choppy, and as the wind increased, ugly black clouds gathered. By midnight, a howling gale was ripping at treetops and whipping froth on the crashing waves. Shortly after three A.M. the Confederate emissaries returned, and handed Anderson their final ultimatum. Unless there was an immediate surrender, the shore batteries would commence fire in an hour. Again Major Anderson refused to haul down his colors, adding wryly this time,

"However, gentlemen, if you do not batter us to pieces, we will be starved out in two days' time."

Solemnly taking their leave, the Confederate officers shook hands all around as Anderson bid them a final farewell.

"If we do not meet again in this world," he said, "I hope we may meet in a better one."

Adhering precisely to their word, the Confederates opened fire at exactly 4:20 A.M. Like the crack of doom came the roar of a single cannon. The Civil War had begun.

The bombardment continued for over thirty hours. Finally the battered fort had to surrender. Although the destruction seemed devastating, it was nothing compared to what almost happened.

The amazing postscript was added four years later. On April 14, 1865, when Anderson, now a Major-General, returned to Fort Sumter, he was accorded the honor of restoring the American flag to its rightful place. He said at that time,

"A remarkable circumstance occurred at the surrender of Fort Sumter, which I can only attribute to a kind Providence. In the bombardment, hot shot was used freely, and judge of our feelings at the surrender, when it was found that a red-hot cannon ball was lying at the bottom of the unused magazine. So that, had I selected that one, the entire garrison must have been blown into Eternity!"

The Black Cagliostro of New Orleans

One of the most incredible characters in the chronicles of New World Voodoo was a pre-Civil War witch doctor known best as Doctor John.

A huge blue-black man with cicatrix marks on his face, Doctor John claimed to have been born a Senegalese prince who'd arrived in New Orleans via a long and arduous route. According to his account, he'd been kidnapped as a child and sold by Spanish slavers to a wealthy Cuban. In Cuba, he became an excellent chef, and eventually gained his freedom. He went to sea as a cook, travelled the world for years and even visited his birthplace, which he found unappealing. Tiring at last of the sea, he settled in New Orleans and worked for a time on the docks.

Because of his size and ferocious appearance, the other Negroes feared Doctor John. He took advantage of the situation and soon, as a result of his vast miscellaneous knowledge gained from his travels, he became an important and rich figure in the world of Voodoo. Before long he bought good property on which he built a house to his own specifications. Next he began to purchase slaves—all female. Some he kept as concubines, 14 he married. Eventually he had 15 wives, 14 black and one white, and nearly 60 children.

When Dr. John did not ride about in a fine carriage drawn by two spirited horses, he rode a pedigreed saddle horse. Early in his Voodoo career, he dressed as a Spanish gentleman. Later he exchanged this colorful costume for a black suit and a white frilled shirt.

Unlike his female colleagues, Dr. John avoided the showy displays of ritualistic dances, snake worship meetings and other mass extravaganzas. He specialized in the more practical aspects of his calling. Amidst a weird conglomeration of dried reptiles, human and animal skulls, preserved scorpions, and other awe-inspiring paraphernalia, he dispensed charms, *gris-gris,* and his services as a healer or fortune teller. Whatever the customer wanted, Dr. John provided. He sold an unlimited variety of charms, love potions, amulets, powders, and bags or bottles containing mysterious, unidentifiable substances.

Not all of Dr. John's clients were Negroes. Many a rich and influential member of New Orleans society sought his advice on love and domestic matters. It was the whites, in fact, who made him rich. All believed implicitly, that Dr. John could read their minds as easily as they read the daily newspapers. In a way, they were right. Dr. John probably had more inside information on the upper echelons of New Orleans white society than anyone else during the 1840's—not by Voodoo but through espionage. Dr. John had paid spies among the ranks of Negro servants in every household of importance in the parish.

Nevertheless, when it came to Voodoo curses, Dr. John was one of the best. He lifted them or lay new ones for clients

with equal ease. More than once he was hauled into court and asked to explain showers of rocks that flew through the air of their own accord. No case was ever built against him, though. Dr. John always had ample proof that he was elsewhere when the rocks began to fly. The police were never able to figure out where the rocks came from; occasionally they'd arrive in time to see them in the air, but were unable to find anyone throwing them, or for that matter, to make them stop.

Dr. John could at least do the latter if the price was right. Once when the slaves of a man named Wilson paid Dr. John $62 for having halted such a bombardment, Wilson himself indignantly sued the sorcerer and recovered his money. As soon as he got the $62 back, the rocks began flying again.

Charlatan or not, John was very generous to the poor. He saw to it that many who might ordinarily have starved were fed regularly. Whether or not he actually believed in any of his own mumbo jumbo is debatable. There are conflicting stories on the subject. Certainly he was a traditional Voodooist in the old, West Indian sense, for he is said to have been one of the first in America to weave Voodoo with Roman Catholicism.

Lafcadio Hearn, who knew Dr. John fairly well, wrote of him after his death,

"He was in many respects a humbug, but he may have believed sincerely in the efficacy of certain superstitious rites of his own. He stated that he had a Master whom he was bound to obey; that he could read the will of his Master in the twinkling of the stars; and often of clear nights the neighbors used to watch him standing alone at some street corner staring at the welkin; pulling at his woolly beard, and talking in an unknown language to some imaginary being."

Old age finally caught up with Dr. John. Although he had undoubtedly made a fortune during his long career, it disappeared almost overnight. Disdaining education, he'd never learned to read or write, and was not a shrewd businessman. He invested in a number of small businesses which all failed. He never trusted banks, and towards the end he was cheated out of everything he had owned. After hiring a young Negro to teach him to write a legible signature, he innocently signed the bottom of a blank piece of paper. As a result he lost his house, his property, everything.

Dr. John was finally forced to move in with some of his children. Shortly afterwards he died. The newspapers said he

was "nearly 100," but in all probability he was in his early 80's. Thus passed the most celebrated witch doctor in the history of New Orleans.

The Case of the Beautiful Ghoul

In the 1890's a terrifying story spread throughout France concerning a beautiful girl from Brittany named Constance Armand. She came from a well-to-do family, and as she approached her 20's, began to develop a peculiar interest in the occult. When she started consulting spiritualists and attending seances, her family objected strenuously, but there was nothing they could do to discourage her.

At the seances she experienced encounters with disembodied spirits of a most disturbing nature. Mme. Armand did all she could to dissuade her daughter from continuing this activity, for it was proving more disturbing every day. Constance brooded frequently, and expressed feelings of genuine loathing for the supernatural beings which she claimed were contacting her. In life, she said, they had been criminals, madmen—even worse. Soon she was having nightmares. Several times a week the Armand household would be awakened by her screams and be forced to listen to her descriptions of her dreams.

The family could not cope with the situation. Constance consulted a medium. The spirits she fled from in her dreams, she said, were the same that communicated with her at the seances. She said they were trying to keep her with them, to make her one of them; they were attempting to prevent her from awakening and returning to the world of the living. The medium offered no worthwhile advice. She merely said that she had no influence over such dark forces which were obviously trying to control the girl's soul.

A physician, however, recognized the problem as psychological. He recommended that Constance give up all seances, and engage in healthy activities more suited to a young

woman. By now thoroughly frightened, Constance followed the doctor's counsel. She plunged into an active social life—theater, parties, and frequent excursions to resorts. All this activity helped slightly, but by now she rarely passed through a single night without experiencing at least one harrowing nightmare.

Since she was extremely beautiful, Constance was never at a loss for male company and eventually became engaged to a wealthy young man. Her family was overjoyed and began making plans for a large, gala wedding. Unfortunately, shortly before the ceremony, the mother of Constance's fiance died. Naturally everyone was terribly upset. The wedding was postponed, and funeral arrangements were made at once.

Constance appeared to be even more deeply affected than Alphonse, her fiance. The day before the funeral she retired to her room shortly after the midday meal, complaining that she felt slightly ill, but that it was nothing serious, and that all she needed was a short nap.

Two hours later her mother heard what sounded like unfamiliar footsteps coming from her daughter's room. She rushed out into the upstairs hallway to investigate and was greeted by an alarming sight. It was no stranger. Constance was descending the staircase, but it was a peculiar Constance. There was something odd about her walk, her facial expression. Her eyes seemed glazed and her mouth appeared thin and hard rather than full and soft as it ordinarily did. She appeared to be almost in a trance; yet, she moved with a positive determination. Her mother was disturbed, especially when she saw her daughter head for the front door, then leave without saying a word, or looking back. She had never done anything like this before.

After an hour or so when Constance did not return, both parents grew increasingly alarmed. When she failed to show up for dinner, and was still absent at bedtime, they decided to notify the authorities. Just as they were about to dispatch a servant, the doorbell began ringing violently. It was Alphonse. He was pale, anguished, and panting for breath.

"Did you find her?" demanded Monsieur Armand, grabbing the young man by the arm.

"Let me have some cognac first." he whispered hoarsely.

Dropping into an easy chair, he buried his head in his hands and began sobbing. Expecting the worst, both of the Armands fought back the tears as best they could. They

handed the trembling Alphonse a tumbler half-filled with cognac, and Monsieur Armand said,

"For God's sake, man, tell us what's happened!"

Alphonse drained the cognac in a single gulp. Then, getting a grip on himself, he told his story.

He, too, he said, had become worried when he learned of the strange behavior and disappearance of his fiance. When one of the Armand servants came late in the evening, and asked him if he would join the search for her, he agreed at once. He was upset enough, preparing for his mother's funeral. Now this. It was almost more than he could bear. To go out and do something, at least, would relieve him of such a helpless feeling.

He was about to leave the house when his valet came running into the room, horror-stricken. He begged his master to come immediately to the room where his mother lay in state, and, without questioning him, Alphonse followed the agitated valet upstairs. He would have rushed into the room, but the valet grabbed his arm and said,

"Stop, monsieur! Listen at the door first."

Alphonse placed his ear to the door. What he heard made no sense at all—a crunching, gnawing sound followed by the occasional rustle and swish of what might be a long, silken gown. He jumped to his feet and asked the terrified valet if he had been in the room. The fellow closed his eyes, crossed himself, and shook his head numbly.

With that Alphonse turned, ran downstairs, called the rest of the servants, who armed themselves with canes, umbrellas, lanterns. They followed him back up, threw the door open and dashed in. The sight that met their eyes was almost too hideous for Alphonse to describe. The lid had been removed from the coffin, the body of his mother taken out and dragged to a corner where it lay sprawled in a disarrayed heap. Squatting over it, with a piece of partially gnawed bone in one hand, was Constance Armand. At the intrusion she leaped to her feet, growling like an animal. Then, rushing forward, she attacked one of the maids, and before anyone could recover from the shock, fled from the room. By the time they had gathered their wits sufficiently to give chase, the girl had vanished.

When Alphonse finished his narrative, the stunned Monsieur Armand notified the police. A general search was launched at once, and finally, after many hours, Constance was

found in a nearby cemetery, frantically digging bare-handed at a fresh grave. Once again she was interrupted. This time, instead of charging directly into the ranks of her pursuers, she ran away. They continued to chase her, keeping her in sight nearly the whole time. Later, she was cornered at the bank of a river. As the police closed in she glared at them and bared her teeth, backing up as they drew nearer. Suddenly the earth gave away beneath her feet. She screamed, fell over backwards into the water, and in an instant was carried off by the current.

A tragic ending perhaps, but far kinder than any which might have been written had she been caught.

The Mysterious Tumbling Coffins of Barbados

Christ Church cemetery near Bridgetown, Barbados, in the British West Indies, is well over 200 years old. To the casual visitor, there is nothing sinister or unusual about the place, but to islanders, there is a frightening aura of overpowering malignancy. They are especially perturbed about a crack that has appeared only recently in one of the cemetery's oldest sealed vaults—a slowly widening crack that by all rights should not be there.

The vault was built early in the 18th century, although no one is certain of the exact date. It was accurately described by a man named Nathan Lucas, in 1820, as being on the west side of the churchyard near a stable (long since gone). Lucas went on to tell that,

"Part is dug out of the live rock; all the rest is wall, arched at the top. The rock is the common limestone of the island. The entrance to it, over the steps, is closed with a double wall from top to bottom, an inner and outer, not united."

Aside from the marble slab, the vault appears today very much as it did in 1820 when the above lines were written. It had begun causing people to lose sleep, and to avoid the area after dark on July 31, 1807. On that date a wooden coffin

bearing the body of Mrs. Thomasina Goddard was interred. As far as anyone knew, the vault had only a single other occupant. According to a worn engraving on the tombstone, there rested below the mortal remains of one Richard Elliot, who had been "snatched away from us on the 15th of May Anno Dom 1724." But when the vault was opened to receive Mrs. Goddard's coffin it was empty. *There was no evidence that anyone had ever been buried there at all.*

A great deal of curiosity arose immediately, but no one did more than offer vague speculations as to what had happened to the bones of Richard Elliot. When the vault was opened seven months later, on February 22, 1811, a leaden coffin was lowered, containing the body of an infant girl, Mary Anna Marie Chase. The tomb was sealed again, remaining untouched for four whole years.

On July 6, 1812, it was reopened and another leaden coffin was placed inside bearing the body of Dorcas Chase, Mary's sister. There are two versions of what was found that day. According to Nathan Lucas, the coffins were not disturbed, but according to a second account, Mary's coffin was now on the far side of the vault, leaning head downward, diagonally against the wall.

Just one month later, on August 9th, the vault was reopened and Thomas Chase, the father of the two children, was buried, also in a leaden coffin. Again there are two accounts of what was found. Lucas reports that the coffins of the two girls "were evidently removed from the situation in which they had been placed; particularly the infants, which had been thrown from the northeast corner of the vault to the opposite angle." The second account states that at the burial of Thomas Chase nothing was found to have been disturbed.

Over the next seven years, the vault was opened three more times to receive coffins. On each occasion witnesses agreed that the coffins within had been shuffled about considerably. Finally, on July 7, 1819, a coffin containing the body of Miss Thomasina Clarke was placed in the vault. It was then sealed for the last time—insofar as receiving any newcomers was concerned. Secret markings were made on the cement, and the heavy marble slab was replaced. The rector of Christ Church, the Rev. Dr. T.H. Orderson, certified at the time that the vault was so well sealed that it would take four men a number of hours at hard work to break the seal, take off the marble slab, put it back, and reseal the tomb. It was noted, however, that

there was never any evidence in the past of tampering or damage to the entrance of the vault.

About a year later, on April 18, 1820, the governor of Barbados was visiting Eldridge's plantation which was not very far from Christ Church. Nathan Lucas, who was to write the most comprehensive account of the matter later, was present along with Dr. Orderson and others. The men began discussing the mystery of the tumbling coffins, and it was decided to go immediately to the vault, open it up, and make a thorough investigation. The owner of the plantation gathered together a crew of field hands, and as soon as they were assembled, everyone set off for the cemetery. Describing what they found when they reached their destination, Lucas wrote in part,

"On our arrival at the vault, every outward appearance was perfect; not a blade of grass or stone touched. Indeed, collusion or deception was impossible, for neither ourselves nor the Negroes knew anything of the matter. The subject was hardly started in conversation before we set out for inspection and the churchyard cannot exceed half a mile from Eldridges."

The opening of the vault itself revealed utter chaos. The coffins of Thomasina Clarke and Samuel Brewster (who had been interred after Thomas Chase) were untouched. The coffin of Mrs. Goddard, the oldest occupant of the tomb, had disintegrated completely. The four other coffins, all leaden, looked as if they had been tossed about like dominoes. Two of them were leaning against the rear wall of the vault at acute angles.

When word of this investigation leaked out, fearful rumors spread throughout the island, especially, but not exclusively among the slaves. In later years a number of further probes were made into the mystery, but no answers were ever obtained. There were those who suggested the possibility of earth tremors as the cause, but these had to be discounted because less solid neighboring vaults and the church itself were undamaged. Water seepage was ruled out for several reasons, primarily because the heavy lead coffins could never have floated, even under the most severe flood conditions. There were no underground tunnels or breaks in the walls until the advent of the crack which recently appeared.

The mystery was heightened in 1943 when another vault, containing the coffin of a former governor, Sir Evan MacGregor, was opened. His coffin, too, had been moved unexplainably, despite the fact that the seal on his tomb was intact.

The only man who might have been able to shed any light on the whole baffling affair was a British historian, the late Sir Algernon Aspinall, who specialized in West Indian history. In 1945 he wrote a detailed account of the mystery in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society*. It was his account, based largely on the notes of another deceased investigator, that differed in several places from that of the eyewitness, Nathan Lucas. Unfortunately, Sir Algernon never explained how his version of the story came to differ with the only man known to have seen and described the actual results of these strange happenings. He did, however, refer to "remarkable manifestations of evil," which he said appeared "between the years 1811 and 1821." Perhaps, the newly appeared crack in the vault is an indication that the manifestations have returned after an absence of nearly a century and a half.

That Devilish Old Moon

There is a good deal of talk going on these days about the moon. In certain scientific circles there is particular concentration upon any subject related to our lunar neighbor except the oldest one of all—the one related to supposed strange effects of moon upon man. After all, doesn't the word *lunatic* mean moonstruck?

There is, of course, absolutely nothing to the superstitions that abound concerning the full moon and madness. There is no scientific evidence, no statistical correlation between the full moon and irrational behavior, or an increase in crime. In other words, it is all pure nonsense—BUT—ask an FBI man and you might very well get an answer like,

"Who says it's nonsense?"

Call the New York City Police Department and you might be told,

"Just ask any oldtimer on the force—a lot of oldtimers believe it."

Ask any person who works in the psychiatric ward of a large hospital and see what sort of a response is forthcoming.

Since ancient times the moon has been held accountable for, or related to, deities, devils, dragons, serpents, floods, sudden appearances of hot air—even the creation of man. Many ancient peoples worshipped the moon; many primitive peoples today still do. The menstrual cycle of many women is a lunar one. Similarly, lunar is the Hebrew calendar, which has been in continuous use for well over 5000 years. Psychiatric records frequently reveal case histories of patients who become violent every 28 days following the same lunar cycle.

Strange beliefs about the moon are as varied as the sources from which they come. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, said that no physician should be trusted unless he knew astronomy. The ancient Greeks firmly believed that the moon affected childbirth. An old Icelandic superstition taught that pregnant women who exposed their faces to the moon would bear insane children. Greenlanders believed that virgins who stared at the moon too long would become pregnant. Sir Isaac Newton tried to prove that the moon had a definite effect on the human body. He was not the only one. An eighteenth century French psychiatrist named Daquin said,

"It is a well established fact that insanity is a disease of the mind upon which the moon exercises an unquestionable influence."

In the year 1847 there appeared an article in *Lancet*, the British medical journal, stating that lunar influence was a definite contributory factor in the periodic recurrence of diseases at anticipated intervals. In 1869, a certain Dr. Peet wrote in the *Indian Medical Gazette*,

"Mariners heedlessly sleeping on deck, are at times quickly affected with night blindness, and their faces become hideously swollen."

Still other medical men asserted that old people always died at the new or full moon.

Recently, when a random group of average American adults were queried on the subject, they, too, recalled having had a number of peculiar ideas about the moon when they were children. Such as,

"It was a great eye, watching me all the time."—"It would

punish me if I was bad."—"I thought it was good luck if I called it 'Lady Moon.' "—"I believed that the moon was female in gender."—"It always frightened me, I thought it was a place full of dead people."

The year 1947 was a typical one. According to *The FBI Reports*, issued regularly by the United States Department of Justice, 1,665,110 major crimes were committed in the USA in 1947. The following are just a few examples.

On January 7, 1947, Alphonse Rocco of Brooklyn came to the end of his road as a fugitive. He was the object of a statewide hunt as the result of his unsuccessful attempt to murder his wife by remote control. After nearly a week of hiding, Rocco peered out through the window of the Catskill Mountain cabin in which he had sought refuge. The full moon shone balefully on the snow-covered ground, lighting the area clearly as 50 heavily armed police officers stealthily closed in on the hideout. The odds against Rocco were overpowering, yet he emerged to shoot it out. Ironically, even if he had been captured, convicted, and sentenced to prison, he would have gone free soon afterwards, for the murder he had plotted failed to take place. But as the full moon shone down on him he chose to keep his rendezvous with violent death.

The next day, January 8th, Richard Beames, 18, and Elizabeth Warner, 16, both of Groton, New York, died in a mysterious murder-suicide. There was no apparent motive. No one had objected to their relationship; the girl was not pregnant. There were no clues. Only a short note was found, and it shed absolutely no light on the tragedy. It read, "I have shot and killed Elizabeth Warner and committed suicide." The moon was still full.

On January 11th, under the full moon in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Marion Shields, 20, shot her G.I. husband, "because I loved him," in order to prevent his returning to camp at the end of his furlough which had expired.

The same day, in Columbus, Ohio, Ernest Wright, a 42-year-old bearded mystic, beat his mother to death with a chunk of iron that he had torn from the kitchen stove. Why? Because her number had come up—number 709, to be exact. Wright explained to the police that he ran his life according to a series of numbers. When he saw his mother's number on the side of the stove, he realized that her life had to end. He also confided to authorities that his mother had been "the most

powerful witch in America." Apparently she had not been quite powerful enough to delay her precipitous departure from the world.

A number of other peculiar events took place in 1947 when the moon was full. The Bronx, N.Y., county jail had never lost a man to that date, yet on January 9th, a prisoner casually walked out without being molested. Later, guards were unable to explain how or why they had allowed it to happen. On the same day, across the continent, in Hollywood, California, Herman Bing, a well-known character actor, shot himself to death. A short note he left behind read in part " . . . Such insomnia I have, I had to commit suicide." On May 4th, the mayor of Havana committed suicide merely because he had been unable to fulfill one of his campaign promises, while in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, a violent race riot broke out between white and Negro troops. On May 5th, John V. Zieck, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, became so furious when his wife refused to come home from a tavern, he went out, stole a ten-ton truck, and battered the tavern down. And on July 3rd, an announcement was issued by Fifth Army Headquarters in Chicago, Ill. that a full-scale investigation had been launched into the orgin of flying saucers.

Does all this evidence prove that perhaps there is really something tangible to the proposition that the moon is indeed a troublesome neighbor? After all, each example cited took place when the moon was full. On the other side of the debate, according to the *FBI Reports*, there were approximately 273 major crimes committed in the United States *every day* during 1947. So it is fairly safe to assume that the full moon had absolutely nothing to do with any of the examples, at least if they were crimes. *But*—ask any oldtimer on the police force. He'll tell you otherwise.

The Strange Story of the Real Cinderella

Everyone thinks of *Cinderella* as just another charming fairy tale. Actually the story dates back to ancient Egypt, and consists of a curious blend of fact and legend. The girl on whom the story is based was a Thracian slave named Rhodopis, who at one time belonged to the same master as the celebrated storyteller Aesop. After being sold to a man named Xanthes of Samos, Rhodopis was taken to Egypt. There, because of her great charm and beauty, she soon became a celebrated courtesan, greatly enriching Xanthes in the process. One of her lovers was a wealthy Greek wine merchant named Charaxus, who happened as well to be the brother of the poetess Sappho. Charaxus bought Rhodopis' freedom, and established her in a lavish house in the city of Naucratis in the Nile Delta, a thriving commercial metropolis with a large Greek Colony. When her lover was away on business, Rhodopis continued to practice her profession, growing richer and more famous all the time. According to legend, one day, while bathing in the Nile, an eagle swooped down, seized one of her tiny slippers, and dropped it some time later at the feet of the Pharaoh Amasis in Memphis. He was so intrigued that he sent a proclamation throughout Egypt demanding that the owner of the slipper come forth. When Rhodopis heard about it she journeyed to Memphis, and presented herself to the Pharaoh with one foot bare, and the other wearing the mate to her missing slipper. Amasis was so smitten by love for the beautiful girl before him that he made her the queen of Egypt. Although she is credited by some ancient writers with having constructed one of the great pyramids, there is little to back up the claim. That she is the original Cinderella, there can be little doubt.

The Phantom Redhead of the Old Parish Jail

During the 1880's, New Orleans newspapers began reporting the peculiar goings-on said to be taking place within the walls of the old parish prison. Rumor had it that the place was haunted by a beautiful phantom redhead. The talk began when the warden was alleged to have been seeing things, things that his underlings wished that they could have seen, too, judging by his descriptions.

Unfortunately the situation got uncomfortably out of hand. One of the cells, number 17, to be exact, became the scene of this beautiful ghost's nightly appearances. The trouble was that she so terrified the prisoners, many of them attempted to commit suicide. Worse yet, several succeeded. Most baffling about the hauntings—if that is what they were—was that whenever screams issued from cell 17, the door was always open when the guards got there, whether the inmate was dead or alive.

So many prisoners occupying that cell either killed themselves or went mad, the authorities decided to close it permanently. This did not put an end to the nocturnal visitations of the phantom redhead. She merely transferred her "affections" to a different cell. In the year 1881 six women tried to commit suicide in it. In each instance, the prisoner was found to be nearly insane with terror. Furthermore, every woman told virtually the same story: that a woman with red hair had come through the door, bent over and whispered horrible threats, laughing all the while, then finally had glided noiselessly out of the cell again, this time through the wall. As usual, after every one of these near tragedies, the cell door was unexplainably unlocked, sometimes even ajar.

Sometimes the ghost appeared to be in a better frame of mind. Occasionally groups of prisoners would appear in the warden's office at odd hours, asking incredulously if they could really leave. Always they told the same story. A smiling redhead had come to their cells, unlocked their doors with a

key that she carried, and led them to the stairway. But before they could thank her for setting them free she invariably disappeared.

Despite occasional respites from tragedy, the prison continued to have the highest suicide rate in all of New Orleans, an unpleasant statistic which made it equally unpopular with felons and police alike.

There was a time when the place was not haunted, back when the prison was new. It did one day come to house a beautiful, coppery-haired inmate. She had elegant manners, flashing dark eyes, and a beguiling air men found difficult to resist. Shortly after being locked in cell 17, she attracted the attention of a police captain. Before long he began taking her for evening walks, handcuffed, of course, to discourage her from flying away like a lovely bird.

One evening, after they had become ever so much better acquainted, they went to a room on Rampart Street for a private tête-à-tête, away from the prying eyes of the outside world. When the captain regained consciousness, his keys, gun, and handcuffs were gone. Back at the prison, the turnkey was found beaten to death, all the cell doors were open, and the inmates all gone.

The redheaded woman only managed to remain free for a single week. She was recaptured and thrust once again into cell 17. This time she knew she could expect no such liberties as before. She had humiliated the captain, and become an accessory to murder, not to mention a number of lesser charges.

What the guards did not know was that she had hidden a long hatpin in a chink in the cell wall. As soon as it grew dark she held the point between two ribs over her upper abdomen, then cast herself against the wall with all her might. When they found her in the morning she lay stiffly on the cell floor, the head of the long pin protruding from her heart. She was the very first prisoner ever to commit suicide in number 17.

The Ghostly Werewolf of Merionethshire

The British Isles abound with strange tales of inexplicable encounters with the supernatural. Often these weird meetings are reported by persons who have never been interested in such things, and who, before their face-to-face confrontations with the unknown, were confirmed disbelievers.

Whether it has been their skepticism which has enabled them to survive and describe their experiences, or merely their refusal to panic, is difficult to say. Perhaps they were never in any danger at all. Typical of such bizarre encounters was the experience of a thoroughly unsuperstitious woman over 50 years ago.

The lady, a Miss St. Denis, was visiting a country farm in a remote district where she had gone to do some sketching and painting. The village railway station, not far from the farm, was one of her favourite places to work. It was empty most of the time because the trains ran infrequently. Besides, it afforded from its platform one of the best views in the entire area.

One afternoon she became so absorbed in her work that she did not realize until it was quite late that dusk was falling. She put away her materials, folded her campstool, and was preparing to leave when she noticed the figure of what appeared to be a man sitting on a small truck some distance away on the platform. He was in the shadows which made it difficult to see him clearly. He was not the stationmaster. That she knew at once. What disturbed her slightly was that the figure sat motionlessly staring at her.

The general area was a bleak one at best, especially towards nightfall. Nearby was an abandoned slate quarry, gray, gloomy, and half-filled with stagnant water. All around were gnarled, sickly trees. Otherwise there was no vegetation at all, just loose rocks and bare, jagged precipices. The only signs of civilization were the silent railroad tracks and the tiny, now empty station.

Unable to rid herself of an uncomfortable creepy feeling at the back of her neck—as though the stranger's eyes were piercing through her clothes—Miss St. Denis coughed self-consciously. There was not another sound. Since she was not a timorous sort of person, she decided to take the offensive, as it were, by challenging the fellow. Calling out in the direction of the motionless figure, she said,

"Would you please tell me what time it is?"

Silence. He just sat there staring at her. It was even harder to see now, for night was approaching rapidly. Satisfied that he was not going to make any sudden moves, she gathered up her belongings. Although she was still a bit apprehensive, she pretended to be completely unconcerned, and walked off. She could hear nothing, but still she had the unmistakable feeling that she was being followed. Taking a quick look back, she saw to her alarm that the peculiar figure was trailing her by only a few paces.

Her heart began pounding rapidly, but she would not allow herself to panic. She began walking faster, fully aware that any moment now she would be reaching the remotest section of the path which wound along a narrow rise with fairly high, rocky cliffs on both sides. A person could scream his lungs out here and never be heard.

Once again she made up her mind to take control of the situation before it could get out of hand. Mustering up all the nerve she could, Miss St. Denis whirled about, stood firm, and called out angrily,

"Who are you? What the devil do you want . . . ?"

She stopped in mid-sentence. In the last fading glimmer of light she caught her first clear glimpse of the mysterious figure which was now closing in on her. It was utterly inhuman, although it walked erect like a man. Tall, covered with shaggy gray fur, it had the head of a wolf with its muzzle open revealing two rows of long, white fangs. The eyes blazed fearfully, and as it approached, it crouched to spring. Instinctively she reached in her pocket for the only object even remotely resembling a weapon—a flashlight. Brandishing it in the creature's face, she snapped on the beam. The thing stopped dead in its tracks, cringed, and covered its eyes with its paws, then *disappeared completely*.

The rest of her trip back to the farm was completely uneventful. Naturally, the next day Miss St. Denis asked a number of questions relating to her hair-raising experience the

night before. The only answer at all satisfying was that some time before, a strange skeleton had been found in a nearby quarry. The bones had been described as seeming to be part animal, part human. As reluctant as she was to accept it, her only conclusion was that she had seen a ghostly werewolf.

Teddy Roosevelt and the Kaiser

After stepping down from the Presidency of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt sailed for Africa on March 23, 1909. It was his main intention to avoid politics. This was to be an expedition of exploring and big-game hunting. But wherever he went the former Rough Rider found himself enthusiastically received. He soon learned that it was impossible to avoid living up to what was expected of an international celebrity. He succeeded in doing some exploring, and he managed to get a bit of hunting in too. But he discovered that it was going to be impossible to complete his tour without speeches, military reviews, banquets and receptions.

As a man of mighty energy he plunged into this social maelstrom with characteristic enthusiasm. Although officially a private citizen, he was received with great pomp by most of the crowned heads of Europe. He lectured at the Sorbonne and at Oxford. When England's King Edward VII died, T. R. was named by President Taft to represent the United States at the State funeral.

There was one country in which Theodore Roosevelt felt ill at ease—Germany. Although he was received there most cordially, he sensed an atmosphere of intangible hostility. Commenting on it later he wrote that it was the only country in which he felt that "every man, woman, and child was my natural enemy—that is, the enemy of my country."

An incident took place in Germany that Roosevelt never wrote about. Fortunately he described it in detail afterwards to a young boy in Milwaukee who had been introduced to him after breaking all records in distributing pamphlets in that

city on behalf of the Bull Moose Party. Remembering the encounter vividly, that boy, over 50 years later, related it to this writer.

It was customary in the days before World War I for Americans traveling abroad to wear tiny red, white, and blue lapel rosettes, representing the American flag. United States citizens were universally proud of their nationality in those days, and they were generally well-liked wherever they went. Teddy Roosevelt was no exception when it came to wearing the rosette.

As he told it, he was invited by the Kaiser one day to attend a grand review of the German Armed Forces—the war machine that in less than a decade was destined to be clashing in mortal combat with American and Allied adversaries. While seated next to the former American president in the reviewing stand, the Kaiser caught a glimpse of the rosette in his guest's lapel. Leaning over and grinning superciliously, Kaiser Wilhelm pointed to the emblem and said,

"How can you Americans call that a flag, with all those red and white stripes? It looks like a stick of peppermint candy." Then, pointing with a grandiose gesture to a passing German naval ensign he went on, "Now *that's* a real flag, with its black eagle and cross."

The former Rough Rider colonel, who had always advocated speaking softly with a big stick in hand, regarded his royal host coldly. All attention was focused on him. Every dignitary within earshot held his breath wondering how the American ex-president would reply to this obvious and gross insult. Then, without raising his voice, Teddy Roosevelt narrowed his eyes and said,

"That's true, your majesty, it may very well look like a peppermint stick to you. But I want to remind you of one very important fact about it—*you'll never lick it.*"

The Curious Tattoo

The average tattoo is an uninspired figure with a proportionately banal inscription. Noticeable exceptions are those tattoos from the Orient and certain parts of Europe. Some of the strangest tattoos, however, have not necessarily been strictly artistic. There is the case of a man who had his will tattooed on his back. After it was reproduced to the last punctuation mark, two witnesses signed their names for the tattooist, who reproduced them at once on his client's epidermis. An eccentric millionaire once paid a high fee to have elaborate hinges tattooed on his elbows, wrists, knees, etc. He insisted that every single detail be absolutely authentic. Assuming that his wealthy client was a hinge manufacturer, the tattooist nevertheless asked why that particular design had been chosen. To his amazement, the man replied that he had just thought it would be nice "to have the old joints hinged." Another millionaire spent nearly $5,000 to have an old master reproduced on his chest. A lesser known but fascinating fact is that some of tattooists' most loyal clients are women, but not in the ordinary sense. At one time it was fashionable for ladies who could afford it to have permanent tints applied to the cheeks, the lips, or the eyebrows. Some even had tiny beauty marks added in a variety of shapes such as butterflies, coronets, stars, and of course, good old fashioned moles. No one could have been more grateful for his tattoos, however, than a British Colonial official, who was captured by a tribe of ferocious Africans around the turn of the century. Preparatory to putting him to death they stripped off his clothing. When they saw the elaborate Chinese dragons tattooed around his body they immediately changed their minds. Anyone protected by such powerful demons, they decided, had better be left alone. With that they released him. So think twice before deciding to have that tattoo removed.

The Red Tigress, Germany's Invincible Spy

Undoubtedly the most celebrated female spy of modern times was the romantic but ill-fated Mata Hari. The most successful however, was a contemporary of hers, whose name to this day remains shrouded in the cloak of anonymity. According to a top German intelligence officer, who served during the First World War, this woman was one of the two "most competent" and important members of their entire espionage network. She was in charge of all the agents operating in France and England. The best general description of her would be that she was to her underlings what the redoubtable "M" is to James Bond.

Neither the French nor the English ever succeeded in learning this fantastic woman's true identity. She was referred to by a number of names—*Mademoiselle Doctor, la Grande Patron, Frau Doktor Elizabeth,* but most universally of all, *The Red Tigress.* A Greek agent in her employ, who eventually died in the line of duty to Germany, once described her as "marvellously beautiful." He went on to say of her,

"She possesses rare intelligence, and has an incredible fund of energy at her command. She exerts upon all who come in contact with her an irresistible charm, and not even officers of high rank, who are subject to her orders, dare to oppose her. Espionage is in her blood; she is not inspired by self-interest, but by passion for her work."

As far as it is known, she made her headquarters in a luxury hotel in Antwerp. Although she was strictly the one who gave orders, she frequently made hazardous sorties into Holland, for it was from there that German agents were dispatched to England. These trips, mostly to Amsterdam and Rotterdam, were so frequent that she was seen often—never alone though, always in the company of two dangerous looking bodyguards.

The Red Tigress had a rigid code of behavior for all her

operatives. They had to be ingenious, bold and fearless, yet obedient and methodical. She insisted that they live temperate lives (particularly when it came to liquor), that they get up early in the morning, and that they avoid serious love affairs. She told them all that any secret agent worth his pay eventually was bound to love his work passionately. She always impressed upon them the danger of taking too many notes, adding that if notes were absolutely necessary, to keep them in code. As for the codes she herself used, they were changed regularly every two weeks. This was especially important as far as her French operatives were concerned, because all communication with them went through Geneva, Switzerland. Thus it was necessary to take precautions against possible Belgian, Swiss, and French counterespionage attempts.

Although she was known to be generous to her employees —some received as much as $4,000 per month—the Red Tigress was as deadly as a black widow spider. She had no compunctions about handing one of her own men over to the enemy if she felt that it served her purpose, or if for any reason she began to mistrust him.

Sometimes an agent destroyed himself by trying to play the game according to his own set of rules. This was dangerous, for she always had her agents spying on one another. A young man who was working in Paris became embroiled in a love affair with a dancer who worked at one of the better cabarets. The fellow received a terse, coded message from his superior, ordering him either to terminate the affair, or to enlist the girl as a German agent. He foolishly chose to attempt the latter. As a result the dancer promptly reported him to the police. He was arrested and shot within a few days.

Whatever her true identity, the Red Tigress was one of the most amazing figures ever to function in the misty world of espionage. There certainly was no other woman like her during all of World War I. She was once reported to have said that she would not exchange her profession for a throne, explaining that it provided her with intellectual stimulation, romance and pleasure. Whether she could function as successfully in the same milieu today, with its electronic devices, massive computers, and sophisticated weaponry, is debatable. It hardly matters, for the Red Tigress easily holds one of the best track records ever earned by anyone in the world's second oldest profession—man or woman.

The Amazing Other Life of Lord Baden-Powell

Look in any encyclopedia or dictionary of biography for the name Lord Robert Baden-Powell. If it predates 1929, the entry will most likely read Lt. General Sir Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, for that was the year he was created first Baron of Gilwell. Probably the sketch will concentrate primarily on him as the founder of the world Boy Scout movement. Few books will reveal that he was also considered in his time to have been the most talented secret agent ever to serve the British Crown.

Baden-Powell never planned on becoming a spy, certainly, but while serving during the early part of his career in South Africa, he learned a number of tricks from the Africans, especially the Zulus, that would have a profound effect on his future. Unquestionably many of the techniques used by scouts today originated among African natives. It was in Africa that Baden-Powell developed his keen senses of observation, recall, and survival, as well as any number of other seemingly unrelated things that would serve him well in the years to come.

Like Sherlock Holmes, Baden-Powell was a master of disguise. Many experienced actors, even today, would be pleased if they could perform as well as this amazing British officer did so often in the line of duty. Typical of his roles was that of the bumbling, eccentric Englishman on a holiday.

Just before World War I, Baden-Powell was directed to ascertain the position and strength of the armaments in a fortress called Cattaro in Dalmatia. As a rather clumsy butterfly collector, he roamed the vicinity of the military installation dressed in an outlandish costume, carrying a long butterfly net, a box of paints, and a sketchbook filled with partially completed drawings of assorted lepidoptera. When he was in plain sight of the fortifications, he sketched outlines of walls as butterfly wings. The number and caliber of gun emplacements became innocent looking dots, which to the average

person would have appeared to be anatomical details of moths or butterflies.

Later, while on a mission to check out certain mountain passes, to see whether or not they would afford the passage of large troop movements, he merely went trout fishing in the area.

The thick-but-jolly-Englishman routine paid off handsomely. In central Europe he once ventured right into the thick of some military maneuvers. This time he passed himself off as an amateur landscape artist. Being a better than average painter helped him immensely. He was eventually discovered, but when he showed the soldiers an innocuous picture called *Dawn in the Mountains*, they were thrown completely off guard. They offered to share their cigarettes and coffee with him as they rested. Assuming him to be exactly what he had hoped they would, the officers discussed freely in German all sorts of important military topics, never once dreaming that the smiling Englishman understood every word. When Baden-Powell finally checked in at headquarters, he had an accurate report on numbers of troops, their weapons, signalling methods, and supply and medical procedures.

Though an army man, Baden-Powell did not confine his activities to dry land. In another of his prewar exploits he was ordered to obtain information on defenses of the Dardanelles. He enlisted the aid of a sea captain whose ship, a rusty old tramp, plied the route between Liverpool and Odessa.

When they had come to within visual range of Baden-Powell's objective, the ship began following an erratic course, zigzagging back and forth, then dropping anchor "accidentally" almost directly offshore from one fort after another. When picket boats came to investigate the ship's peculiar behavior, the captain explained that he was having trouble with his steering gear. The ancient tub's battered appearance was in itself enough to make the skipper's alibi sound plausible. Of course, while they were "making repairs" the ship's single passenger, outwardly an eccentric wealthy Englishman on an offbeat ocean trip, saw no reason why he should not take advantage of the situation by going fishing in a small boat. There is no record of what sort of fish Baden-Powell caught during that particular junket, but London was extremely interested in what he did bring back: detailed sketches of gun emplacements, accurate depth soundings, and up-to-date maps that charted potential landing places for troops.

Some of his most outstanding exploits were carried off right in the heart of the future enemy's military establishments. Once Baden-Powell merely wandered into a German naval yard. His intention was to check out a new machine shop and the dry dock facilities. What made this jaunt so incredible was the fact that he was under constant surveillance. His coolness and determination made it possible for him to keep the Germans guessing as to his actual purpose for being there. When he had finally accomplished his mission, he gave them the slip and returned to his base of operations.

One of his closest scrapes took place at the edge of a German ordnance testing range. Word had reached British intelligence in London that the Germans had developed a new improved machine gun. With typical Baden-Powell nerve, instead of wasting precious months trying to buy off avaricious free lance spies, he headed directly for the testing range. Wearing rather seedy clothes and a two-day's beard, he armed himself with nothing more lethal than an almost-empty brandy bottle. With that he went straight to the firing line, which was obscured by a high board fence and guarded by sentries.

Making his way cautiously to the furthest point from the guards, he loosened a plank in the fence and coolly made his observations. Suddenly he heard the crunch of approaching footsteps. Quickly he replaced the board. Reaching into his pocket for the bottle, he uncorked it, took a mouthful of brandy, swished it about in his mouth and spit it out. Then he poured a bit more onto his hands and rubbed them on his jacket. When the German sentry arrived, Baden-Powell smelled like a distillery. He lurched a bit as he walked, and managed to speak a bit thickly. He was the very model of a harmless, friendly drunk. He even offered the soldier a snort from the nearly empty bottle. Instead of arresting the British agent, the sentry merely declined the drink, took Baden-Powell firmly by the arm, and gently suggested that he go home and sleep it off.

He was finally caught in the act. Once again, Baden-Powell had penetrated a military installation. The Germans were conducting rocket and observation balloon tests at the time he was seized. This hardly put an end to his amazing career, however. He managed to escape shortly afterwards. There can be no greater testimony to the unqualified success of his career in military intelligence than the fact that he lived to the

ripe old age of 84. He died in 1941. Had he survived until the end of World War II, he probably would have gone on to become the only octogenarian spy on record.

The Curious Saga of the Beard

Let the youthful mopheads of the 1960's take heart when they look back on the fearful and often deadly persecutions of their long-haired and pogoniate (heavily bearded) predecessors. Numerous thorny issues divide mankind today, of course, but it would be extremely difficult to find another set of human characteristics more surrounded by controversy, superstition, and unmitigated cussedness, than long hair and beards.

Ancient Hindus firmly believed that to shave either the head or whiskers would prove fatal. Consequently the shaggy look was considered both stylish and essential to longevity. A peculiar situation existed in Egypt, where it was mandatory for the pharaoh to wear a beard. For centuries this created an insurmountable obstacle to ambitious queens. The royal line of succession passed through the females, but only the males, being bearded, were permitted to occupy the throne.

A radical change was wrought during the XVIIIth dynasty around 1500 B.C. Queen Hatshepsut, the regent, cut through red tape and satisfied tradition in a single sweep, simply by having herself crowned King of Egypt. History tells us that she was an immensely successful pharaoh. The only concession that Hatshepsut had to make was to wear a beard.

Beards have triggered off many other quaint customs. A Fiji Island chieftain invariably approached his trip to the barber with great fear and trepidation. Just to make sure that no evil would befall him as a result of getting shaved, he always ate a man first. In New Zealand, less drastic safeguards were taken. All hairs removed from the head were gathered up and hidden, to prevent birds from picking up stray strands for use in their nests. Should the hair be so used, its owner was certain to wind up with a permanent headache.

Nowhere have beards stirred up more violent controversy than among Europeans and Americans. Each belief was stranger than the last. Bearded men, it was once rumored, had appetites for horses. Hostility towards the bewhiskered was thus understandable—if unchecked, they could conceivably eat up the world's primary mode of transportation. Fortunately the rumor was proven untrue, and the whisker triumphed.

But other myths about beards could not be stifled. Beards were once said to be caused by overeating. Another pundit disagreed: they were the result of abstaining from tobacco. A more serious dispute arose when a church faction compared bearded men to satyrs and billygoats, charging them with making a public display of their truly depraved and lustful natures. Defenders of the beard were outraged. The false, vile accusation, they protested, bordered on heresy. Using legions of saints for proof, they declared that whiskers denoted supreme virtue.

Still, in many quarters, beards were regarded as synonymous with sin. Bearded priests were once give a choice between shaving and excommunication. The Venetian senate later decreed long beards illegal, and in many medieval countries, bearded men were lumped with Jews, Moslems, and lunatics as social outcasts. Such rank discrimination continued on and off over the centuries. War and disease, asserted some, were God's punishments for wearing beards and long hair. Records offer no proof, but possibly the asserters were bitter baldies and barbers.

Assaults on masculine shrubbery were almost always counter-attacked. Shaving, stated a pro-whisker spokesman produced effeminate-looking men—after all, wasn't a smooth face more feminine than masculine? Other defenders claimed, for some reason, that beards kept the teeth from falling out. Help often came unexpectedly from ecclesiastics, some of whom asserted that beards were protection against flies, and *everyone* knew that flies were spawn of the devil. In 17th century England, one John Bulwer took a very firm stand on the subject, calling shaving "monstrous, shameful, indecent, unnatural, and impious." And more than one German town recognized the inherent virtue in a hairy face by choosing their mayors by beard length.

But beards and their owners continued to suffer. The 16th was a particularly bad century for them. Typical was the experience of a French churchman, Guillaume Duprat, when

he was appointed Bishop of Clermont. Duprat had both a noble heritage and a noble beard—a beard said to be the finest in France. And he was proud of it. When he arrived to take over his new benefice, a contingent of his subordinates-to-be, to Guillaume's dismay, greeted him with irate protests against his mighty facial adornment. The clerics assaulted the astonished bishop-elect with razors, scissors, basins, and hot soapy water. A few minor cuts and some major drenchings came out of the skirmish, but Duprat escaped with his beard intact, roaring,

"You can keep the bishopric, but I shall keep my beard!"

And with that he retired to his castle with a solemn oath never to set foot in Clermont again, an oath that he kept.

France was singularly opposed to unshaven faces.

Lawyers and judges were forbidden to appear in court with beards, and litigants were told not to expect justice unless they shaved. The prohibition stemmed from the belief that any man wearing a beard was able to use it as a mask to hide treasonous intentions. (The French monarch wore a beard with impunity. He could hardly be suspected of treason against himself.)

The English of the time were also anti-beard. A London edict of 1543 prohibited men with long beards from gaining custody of orphans. Since many orphans were wealthy and thus assets to their guardians, a beard could be a costly luxury. One year before, the sheriff of Canterbury himself was fined three shillings and fourpence for wearing a beard. At Lincoln's Inn no one with a beard was permitted to dine at the main table, and no one could dine anywhere at the inn if he wore more than a two weeks growth of whiskers. Two-time offenders were permanently barred from the premises.

After Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, beards grew popular, and one of her majesty's more unscrupulous fiscal advisers recommended taxing them. The tax, something of an affront to the English tradition of freedom, was actually put into effect, but was repealed after a year. A similar program to abolish beards was launched personally by Peter the Great in 1698. The czar of all the Russias took razor in hand and shaved all the ranking boyars. He then decreed that all his male subjects shave or pay, partially exempting priests, who were taxed a nominal one kopek each. Every time any other bearded man passed the gates of any city he had to pay a fee of a hundred rubles. Remarkably,

there was no revolution, but morale collapsed, especially during the bitter Russian winters. A painful gloom hung over the country for a full 60 years until Catherine II relented and permitted beards to blossom once again.

No single enemy of facial plumage offered a more rational attack than the 16th century Italian philosopher-physician, Julius Caesar Scaliger. He regarded the mustache and beard as a "hedge about the mouth" which severely interfered with eating, drinking, talking, and breathing. He warned that the mouth should not be:

". . . beseiged with such long and propendent Mustachoes, as the Senses teach us; for although we endeavor to prevent these Mustache-haires while we eat, yet they descend, and entering together with the meat into the mouth are bitten with the teeth whose peeces we are compelled either to spit out, or sometimes imprudently to devour: and if we drink these haires swim in our drinke, moystened with whose sprinkling dew they drop down upon the beard of the Chin and Cloaths, which is an unseemly sight."

A great martyr to the cause of the beard was one Joseph Palmer, who lived in Fitchburg, Massachusetts in the 1830's. He was sneered at by neighbors, stoned by children, and horror of horrors (at the time) accused of being a Jew.

Palmer, however, steadfastly clung to his luxuriant whiskers. When the pastor of his church tried to prevent him from taking communion, Palmer went to the communion table and helped himself. This was too much for his good New England neighbors. Four days later four men tried to bushwack him and cut off his beard. Whereupon Palmer whipped out a jack knife and routed the rascals, inflicting some wounds in the bargain. He did not reckon with the law as it was interpreted in the land of the Puritans. He was promptly arrested and booked on charges of "unprovoked assault."

Palmer pleaded not guilty but was convicted and fined. Outraged, he refused to pay—and was unceremoniously dumped in the county jail. Still undaunted, he began smuggling letters of protest to friends, and before long was waging a vociferous war against the Establishment in the press. The pro-Palmer forces rallied, and soon embarrassed the authorities, for it was all too obvious that the imprisoned man's only crime was that of demanding his right to wear whiskers. The doors of the jail were thrown open and he was invited to leave.

But Joseph Palmer was a man of principles, and he flatly refused to move until he was fully vindicated. Local officials did not know quite what to do, but to Palmer the issue was clear. He merely folded his arms and staged a one man sit-in, perhaps the first in American history. He became such a monument to the collective guilt of the authorities, that they finally took their now celebrated prisoner and bodily ejected him to freedom. Palmer indeed had the last word. When he died, his bewhiskered likeness was engraved on his tombstone above the words, "Persecuted for wearing the beard."

Fortunately there has been a miniscule advance in the world since the days of Joseph Palmer—at least where beards are concerned. It is said that a man can wear one almost anywhere on earth today and get away with it—even in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Was It Really Sir Arthur Conan Doyle?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was a firm believer in spiritualism, despite his background and training as a physician. Although he was best known for his novels and short stories, he frequently contributed pieces of non-fiction, essays and letters, concerning the occult, to various publications.

Shortly before he died in 1930, he published an article concerning life after death, which was read with considerable interest by a professor of English and American literature at a leading American university. He was very impressed by it, and he wrote the famous author a complimentary letter immediately afterwards.

He mailed the letter in June. When he learned that Conan Doyle had died on July 7th, the professor reconciled himself to the fact that he would never receive a reply. Much to his amazement, he received a letter from England several days later. It was postmarked shortly before July 7th, and it bore the novelist's home address. It was an eerie feeling receiving a

letter from a dead man. Anxiously tearing the letter open, he found it to contain an engraved card. It said in effect that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, being too ill to answer any communications at present, appreciated the correspondent's letter and hereby acknowledged it.

When he had finished reading the engraved message, the professor noticed that on the bottom of the card was a handwritten note in a very shaky script which said, "over." Suddenly elated, he turned the card to its reverse side and found a short message in Conan Doyle's own handwriting. Briefly, the author wrote that he expected to "pass over" very soon. But, he went on, if it was at all possible, he fully intended to return. Thanking the professor for his letter, Conan Doyle added that if they were ever to meet it would be in the very near future.

The professor was extremely pleased to receive this unusual card, for it was undoubtedly the last letter Conan Doyle ever wrote in his life. For that reason alone it was extremely valuable. But what of the strange promise?

That evening, when the professor returned to his apartment for dinner, he observed that it was a calm, somewhat muggy night. When he walked through the front door he found dinner waiting for him on the table with a note. His housekeeper had prepared everything early because they were giving away free dishes at the local movie that night and she wanted to get there well in advance of the mob. Except for his dog, the professor was entirely alone. He noticed that two candles were burning on the table—his housekeeper was an incurable romantic, who insisted upon providing little surprises from time to time.

He fixed himself a drink, and just as he was about to sit down, noticed that the candle flames began flickering violently. There was no reason for this because the apartment building was a new one. Everything was tightly sealed, and there were no cracks which could possibly permit stray drafts. A strange feeling came over him—a feeling that he was not alone. Furthermore, the dog suddenly ran to one side of the room wagging his tail as if greeting a new arrival—yet his hackles stood straight up. The professor suddenly remembered the card he had received that morning, and addressing the empty air, approximately where the dog was now facing, a large easy chair in the living room, said,

"If that's you, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, welcome to my

home, but please, try to make some sort of sign—something to let me know that it really is you."

The dog had now flopped down before the easy chair and was moving his head up and down peculiarly, as if an unseen hand was stroking it and making it bob like that.

Nothing else happened. There was no answer to the professor's question, nothing that could be interpreted as a sign. Abruptly the dog got up, walked to the door as though following someone, still wagging his tail, his hackles still standing on end. Then, the entire atmosphere changed. Everything seemed as it had been before. The candles stopped flickering. The dog went into the kitchen and began lapping up water from his bowl.

Was this indeed, a visit from the ghost of the deceased novelist? Was it merely the result of an overstimulated imagination triggered off by the receipt of Conan Doyle's last letter? Most likely it was the latter. Only one question remains. How do we explain the behavior of the dog, who could hardly have been affected by a letter?

The Talking Mongoose of Manx

Back in the 1930's it made headlines the world over. The word "it" must be used, because despite all that has been said, in the final analysis, no one has ever been able to figure out exactly what it was. It identified itself as a mongoose, however, and so we shall call it. What finally became of it is a mystery, but during the years of its notoriety this mongoose lived in a farmhouse on the Isle of Man, known as Doarlish Cashen, a suitably lonely spot looking out on the sea.

The house, a very old one, was bought by a Mr. James T. Irving in 1917. Several old tales suggested it was haunted, but Irving and his wife paid little attention, for the same thing is said about many old Manx houses. There was nothing extraordinary about life in Doarlish Cashen until 1931. But then the Irvings began to hear strange noises behind the walls—

tappings, hissings, growls, squeaks, and other unmistakable animal sounds. Though obviously whatever was causing the noise was not a mouse, it seemed of a very solid nature. That it might be supernatural did not at first enter the Irvings' minds.

One day Mr. Irving heard a peculiar gurgle, resembling a baby learning to articulate. He listened to the spot along the wainscoting from which the sounds came, then on an impulse began making sounds of his own. First he imitated a dog barking, then a cat meowing. To his amazement, they were repeated in a shrill but human-like voice, pitched in a very high register. Irving repeated the sounds again, this time following each one with the name of the creature he was imitating. The thing behind the wall parroted every word he said.

Within a few weeks, after intensive daily language lessons, the thing—whatever it was—had learned to speak perfectly. Often it would keep Irving awake with questions on every conceivable subject. He commented later that he had the feeling that the owner of the squeaky voice had been able to speak all along, and had merely gone through the motions of learning to get the Irving family accustomed to the odd situation gradually. When questioned on the matter the creature insisted that this was not so, that it had understood human speech before, but had been unable to vocalize until specifically taught.

Irving kept questioning his mysterious guest himself. It was evasive as to where it had come from or what it was. In the beginning it said that it was a ghost in the form of a weasel, but finally retracted the statement and claimed to be a mongoose, adding that its name was Jeff. This at least cleared up the matter of gender, and the pronoun "it" could now be dropped.

Jeff told the Irvings that he was not malevolent, and that he wanted to be friendly, but he hinted darkly that he was capable of killing them all if they did not accept him with open arms. Jim Irving did not care for this at all, and he went after Jeff with a vengeance. He tried hunting the mongoose with a gun. When that failed he attempted to do the job with rat poison, but to no avail. All he succeeded in doing was to provoke Jeff to curse, shriek, and throw things.

The Irvings finally made peace with Jeff and settled down to a more comfortable existence. He rarely allowed them to see him in the beginning, although on a few occasions he displayed

his paws from holes in the walls, and allowed the family to touch him. Once he let Mrs. Irving put her finger in his mouth. He bit her and she let out a yell. At this he merely told her to put some ointment on it and to stop complaining. Eventually word of his presence leaked out, and people began referring to him as a spook or a poltergeist. There was nothing otherworldly about him though. In addition to eating and drinking, he performed all the normal bodily functions. He even got sick occasionally and threw up undigested vegetables that disagreed with him. Otherwise he was very clean and never presented a housebreaking problem. Jeff did, however, continually threaten to urinate on people he disliked, and he frequently spat on the necks of unwelcome visitors—hardly the sort of things one expects of a ghost.

Jeff was jealous of the Irvings—that is, he regarded them and their house as his own private property. He occasionally talked to strangers, but only if the mood struck him. If he sensed that they were curiosity seekers or did not believe in his existence, he shut up like a clam. Mainly his two worst habits were swearing and throwing things. He had an incredible memory, exceptionally keen eyes, and outstanding powers of observation. He did not confine his activities to Doarlish Cashen like a proper haunt. He made frequent forays to neighboring houses and farm property. He was forever reporting details of things he had observed, all of which were proven to be quite accurate later. He loved to attend horse and cattle shows, so he was always very well informed on animal matters.

Another of Jeff's more disconcerting habits was to hitch rides on buses and trucks. Once he stole a bus driver's lunch by sneaking up to the paper bag, slitting it, and making off with the contents when no one was looking. When the word of his stowing away on buses reached the company, a mechanic rigged up a gadget underneath a bus in hopes of electrocuting Jeff, but Jeff was too smart for him and even told Irving about it.

Jeff was quite fond of listening to the BBC, and through newscasts he learned a great deal of what was taking place in the world. He even learned to read. Since Doarlish Cashen was primarily a farm, Jeff proved to be quite useful to the Irvings in a number of ways. As a rule he got rid of mice and rats by throwing stones at them or by meowing like a cat, but if he had to he killed them. When the farm's goats stayed

away too long Jeff would go out, bark at them like a shepherd dog, and herd them home. Most important of all, he caught rabbits for the dinner table whenever the Irvings asked him to.

Although Jeff refused to show himself to strangers, he did loosen up a bit with the Irvings. Once, on condition that Jim Irving promise to cover up his eyes, and not peek, Jeff came out from behind the wainscoting and tugged repeatedly on his trouser legs, waiting after each tug to see if the promise would be kept. It was as if he were playing a game. Jeff finally let Voirrey, the Irving's daughter, take photographs of him, but they did not come out very well, and persons who saw them were skeptical of their authenticity.

Shortly after his presence became known, Jeff was investigated by two men, Harry Price, a British psychic researcher, and R. S. Lambert, editor of the BBC publication, *The Listener*. After completing their inquiries, they published a book entitled *The Haunting of Cashen's Gap*. This prompted a BBC director to call Lambert a liar. Lambert wasted no time in suing the man for libel and collecting damages. When the case was appealed, that action also made news, and the first one in Doarlish Cashen to learn about it was Jeff. He overheard two men talking about the appeal in town, and when he came home, he told Jim Irving all about it.

There were a number of other remarkable things that Jeff managed to say and do. Outnumbering his accomplishments, however, are the unanswered questions about what he really was, where he came from, and what accounted for his extraordinary intelligence. None of these will ever be answered. In the middle 1930's the Irvings sold Doarlish Cashen and moved away. The new owner said that he had shot a strange looking animal on the property not long after taking possession of it. It could have been Jeff, for he was never heard from after that. On the other hand, he could have just as well gone away with the Irvings. Whether he was a mongoose or not, he was certainly likable—once you got used to him—and it would be a shame to think of him as having come to such an ignominious end. Besides, to be blasted into eternity like that seems decidedly out of character for such a clever little fellow as Jeff.

The Strange Case of the Weeping Turtle

An unexplained event involving a sea turtle occurred in a little Italian fishing village not far from Amalfi a few years ago. Some fishing boats brought the creature back from their daily battle with the sea. It was immense, the largest sea turtle any of them had ever seen, so they took it to the center of the village and put it on display in the piazza fountain. Soon the whole village flocked to the piazza to get a firsthand glimpse of the huge creature for themselves.

Hundreds gathered around the turtle, gasping in wonderment. Its shell was at least eight feet in diameter. Suddenly, in sight of everyone, the wretched thing began weeping. Huge tears appeared in its eyes and trickled down its wrinkled face. It even opened its mouth and started to sob like a grief stricken human. A wave of compassion for the unfortunate reptile swept over the women, and they too began to weep.

Before long, all onlookers were crying as though their hearts would break. It was a bizarre, yet tragi-comic scene, this circle of peasants milling about, sniffling, wailing, and in their midst, a huge, shellbacked sea beast, also crying like a baby. Had anyone thought of returning the turtle to the ocean, perhaps everyone might have been able to dry his tears. But instead they kept up their lamentations which by now echoed sorrowfully through the square. Thus, surrounded by a crowd of melancholy mourners, and weeping till the very end, the unhappy turtle died.

A Gift From the Enemy

The following is one of those odd incidents which dot the panorama of human experience, and unfortunately, often become lost. Had it not been for a chance encounter between an American and a German, two years after World War II, the story might never have reached these pages.

It was July, 1947. The purser of an American freighter, the *M/V Knob Knot,* was standing anxiously on the dock of a tiny sub-arctic Icelandic port, Siglufjordur, watching a Swedish ship draw slowly alongside. A weeks-old nationwide strike had among other things closed all the liquor stores in Sigulfjordur, and the arrival of the foreign vessel was an exciting event, especially to the thirsty, bored, and frustrated Americans. They hoped its cargo would be booze.

One of the first men to come ashore was the vessel's second mate. The American hailed him at once, found to his satisfaction that he spoke a heavily accented, but passable English, and was delighted to accept the Swede's invitation to come aboard for a beer. He would soon find out if there was whiskey for sale. When the purser entered his host's cabin, however, he forgot his mission completely.

A framed enlarged snapshot of a soldier, hung prominently on the forward bulkhead. The insignia on the uniform told the purser he was looking at the picture of a German, an infantryman in full battle pack. He was very young, not more than 18. The Swedish second mate noticed his guest's interest and said,

"My younger brother, he was killed in the war."

"But isn't he wearing a German uniform?" asked the American.

"Ja," came a rather subdued reply. "I am a German. I am a Swedish citizen now, but I am German."

The American flushed. The last Germans he had seen were Wehrmacht stragglers in France, two years before. As he reached out to accept his bottle of beer he said,

"It's funny, isn't it? If you and I had met a few years ago we might be trying to kill each other. Now here we sit on a Swedish ship having a friendly beer together—yet we're both exactly the same persons we were then. It's a crazy world, isn't it?"

The German took a swig from his bottle, wiped some foam from his mouth and said,

"I tell you something even crazier." I have gone to sea now for twenty years. I ran away when I was fifteen and shipped out from Hamburg, two years before the war, 1937. So when the war came I was a good sailor. Instead of going into the *Kriegsmarine*—the navy—I stayed a merchant seaman. I am very lucky. I was torpedoed three times by English *unterseebooten.* Many of my shipmates died, so by 1944 I was first mate. In Germany that was very good for twenty-two years."

During the course of the next few hours the two seamen drank a number of beers and talked of many things. But none of them were "crazier" than the strange story that the ex-German officer began with, none of them even approached it.

The essence of his story was this. He had been a first mate in the German Merchant Marine, which by mid-1944 had almost ceased to exist. A few ships occasionally slipped through the effective Allied blockades, but they were in the minority. He himself had been torpedoed three times and had been among the fortunate few to survive.

Like the rest of his shipmates he had come to believe that his chances of seeing the year 1945 were slim. By December, 1944, he was beginning to hope that maybe he might just make it a little while longer. Then his hopes were dashed. He was assigned to a small, creaky old rust tub that a five inch shell would have sent to the bottom. She was to take the lead in a three-vessel convoy, unescorted because Grand Admiral Doenitz had no more fighting ships to spare.

The morale of the convoy leader's crew had reached its lowest ebb by Christmas Eve. The weather was foul. Short-wave British and American broadcasts described mounting Allied victories. Then came the worst news of all. A brief, coded message broke German radio silence to inform the already gloom-swept crew that they were heading straight into a heavy concentration of American destroyers. Typical of the insane bravado that swept the Nazi hierarchy in the declining

months of the Reich, it ordered them to remain on course, and to defend themselves as best they could if attacked.

The captain of the lead ship read the laconic order to his officers, adding that in his opinion it was their death sentence. Still, as good Germans it was their duty to go on, he told them—and the men, whose mission could hardly affect the war one way or the other, did indeed prepare to continue their suicidal voyage. The Captain ordered brandy for all hands. The doomed men would have one last glorious bash before they went to the bottom.

Whether the crews of the other two ships in the convoy got drunk that Christmas Eve the ex-first mate did not know. But his crew did drink, as they never had before. There was no question in their minds as to whether there would be any tomorrow. They knew that for them there was none.

But when they awoke from their stupors on Christmas day they were still very much alive. The few who had volunteered to take the watches and remain sober had a fantastic tale to relate. The radio message carrying their orders had been absolutely accurate. They encountered the American destroyers at very close range shortly after dawn. Not a shot had been fired. Instead, the Americans had blinked a short message in morse code—Merry Christmas—in German. The enemy had given them the most precious gift of all—their lives.

The Amazing Chorus of the Pacific

During World War II American troops stationed on Pacific islands often learned, to their delight, that the natives loved to sing American songs. Furthermore, they learned them very quickly. By 1945 one of the most popular songs among Micronesian Islanders was *You Are My Sunshine* in strangely accented, but perfectly understandable English.

An amazing musical experience befell one group of U.S. Marines. Early in the fighting, this unique team observed that

by playing records, they could often make friends with shy or undecided islanders. They found an even warmer reception when they recorded native music and played it back for the singers. So they worked out a public relations scheme. They would make an advance landing on an island, play American music, record the native music, exchange gifts, and leave. This prepared the islanders for the arrival of U.S. troops and ensured, when possible, a friendly reception. Also, the Marines were able to build up a library of hitherto unrecorded music. All in all the operation worked well.

While in the Solomons the Marine musicologists heard that an isolated island called Vella Lavella was likely to be populated with a friendly people. So they landed there with their bulky equipment, only to discover that the village they sought was on a high mountain surrounded by impenetrable jungle, and therefore inaccessible.

They lugged their generators, amplifiers, and disc recorders to the closest clearing to the village, but still found themselves about a mile away. They had cable with them, however, and strung it from there to the village, carrying along just their microphones and an old-fashioned wind-up phonograph.

They found the villagers, who seldom received vistors from the outside world, anxious to be hospitable. They were enchanted when they heard the tinny sound of the phonograph, and quite flattered when the Marines asked to hear some old native songs in return. They knew that they could do better than the strange box. The Marines in turn looked forward to hearing something really different. They were not disappointed. What they heard was entirely different from anything they had heard on any other island.

The native chorus lined up in a fashion strangely reminiscent of an *a capella* choir back home. Of course, it had to be nothing more than coincidence. After all, this was one of the remotest spots in the Solomons. The singers had never seen white men before, let alone American Marines.

When this loin-cloth-clad group began to sing Handel's *Hallelujah* in four-part harmony, and in identifiable German, the Marines were practically speechless. The men back at the clearing who were manning the recording equipment couldn't believe their ears. Courtesy forbade interruption, but when the concert was over—and it was a good one too—the Marines expressed their admiration, and said in effect,

"It was beautiful, but we would really like to hear one of your *own* old songs."

The natives could hardly understand the question. This *was* one of their old songs, they insisted, and one of their best. They had been singing it for several generations, they explained. Fathers and mothers had handed down their parts to their children, painstakingly teaching them every note until it was learned to perfection.

The Marines probed and questioned with diplomacy. Finally the answer was uncovered. A German missionary had lived among these people late in the 19th century. No one still alive could actually remember seeing him. Only a single old man of the village had even heard of him, and what he could tell was strictly second hand. The missionary had long since faded into oblivion, but the music he had brought from another world still lived on.

The Fabulous Fingers of Dr. Kersten

Many incredible stories arose from the smoke and ashes of World War II. Few, however, can match the astounding but true history of Dr. Felix Kersten.

An Estonian by birth, a Finn by citizenship, and a Hollander by residence, Kersten spent almost the entire war a virtual prisoner in Nazi Germany. Yet as a result of his peculiar status, he snatched thousands of victims from the bloody clutches of the Gestapo. Once he even arranged for Heinrich Himmler voluntarily to have coffee and cake with a representative of the World Jewish Congress—on Hitler's birthday, of all times.

The reason underlying Kersten's unusual position was a simple one. He was Himmler's personal doctor.

Felix Kersten was not an M.D. He was a manual therapist, a practitioner of Finnish massage. He had been trained in

Finland and Germany, after serving as an officer in the Finnish Army during the First World War. Adept at the art, he became the protégé of an unbelievably skilled Tibetan masseur named Dr. Ko, a lama who had come from the Far East to perfect his knowledge of western counterparts to his own ancient skills.

When Dr. Ko departed from Berlin in 1925, Kersten was only 27, but he had developed a sensitivity of touch which enabled him to diagnose with his fingertips any ailment. Within a very short time he had a successful practice and plenty of money. He also had a policy that endeared him to everyone he met: no cure, no fee. By 1928 his reputation had spread widely, and he was summoned to the Hague to examine Prince Hendrik of the Netherlands. Doctors had given the prince six months to live. Kersten restored him to full health, foiling every medical prognosis.

It was during that trip that Kersten, whose ancestors had come from Holland, developed a deep love for that country, and purchased a house in the Hague, making it his legal residence.

He kept his Berlin apartment, however, so that he could commute between the two cities. Shortly afterwards he treated a wealthy German industrialist, Auguste Rosterg, who was so grateful for the relief that although Kersten's fee had been 1,000 marks, he paid him 100,000.

With this windfall, Kersten purchased an estate, 60 kilometers east of Berlin. It was called Hartzwalde, and consisted of nearly 750 acres of rich meadow and forestland.

The passing years thus found no happier man in Europe than Felix Kersten. He was wealthy, and he had many good friends. A true gourmet with epicurean tastes, he grew stout, but wore it well. Politics did not concern him. But regarding the Nazis as little better than criminals, he helped their victims whenever he could.

In 1938 he got married. He also received the shock of his life. He was asked to examine Heinrich Himmler. At first he flatly refused, saying that he did not want to get mixed up with Hitler's arch hatchetman. Unfortunately, the man who asked him was an old friend who was under severe pressure. With misgivings, Kersten agreed to look Himmler over.

He traveled to Berlin in March, 1939. Sentries at number eight Prinz Albert Strasse, Himmler's headquarters, were startled. To come to this dreary building of one's own accord, ask

for the Reichsführer himself, and then fail to use the mandatory *Heil Hitler*, was unusual to say the least.

Kersten found the dreaded chief of the S.S. and the Gestapo a puny, ashen-faced little man with cold, gray, narrow eyes, whose slightly Mongoloid features were contorted with pain. Kersten ordered him to strip to the waist. Himmler gladly obeyed.

The Reichsführer was subject to severe stomach cramps, unrelieved by any doctor in Europe. A single flesh-kneading session by Felix Kersten all but cured him, however, and in return Himmler offered the Finn a colonelcy in the S.S. Kersten diplomatically refused, but agreed to continue with the treatments. Himmler immediately issued orders that the doctor was to be admitted without question at any time and that his telephone calls were to be put through directly, at all times. This privilege was to be immensely useful to Kersten in the future.

During the first two weeks, Kersten treated Himmler every day. He discovered that when the Reichsführer was relieved from pain he talked freely. He began to tell of Hitler's plans to launch a "short" war.

Some months later, after the war had obviously become World War II, Kersten wanted to discontinue treating Himmler, but was dissuaded by officials at the Finnish Embassy, who told him that it was his duty to remain on the job and report anything of importance to his government.

As matters worked out, Felix Kersten was able to do far more good at Himmler's side than anywhere else. When Holland fell, he managed to save many of his friends, even though it earned him the everlasting hatred of the Dutch Gestapo. He even got permission to use Himmler's personal postal box number for all incoming mail from Holland, and, as a result, actually received uncensored letters from the Dutch underground. Thus, much correspondence from the Dutch Resistance went to London with the unwitting help of Heinrich Himmler.

The tenser Himmler's stomach got as his war pressures mounted, the more grateful he was for Kersten's care. The doctor began obtaining freedom for concentration camp prisoners. From time to time he got Himmler to stop executions. He had to tread cautiously at all times, but it would be safe to say that over the years he saved tens of thousands, perhaps more.

Himmler's top echelon henchmen were constantly jockeying for positions of power, and in this atmosphere of hostility, the jovial, rotund Kersten incurred the suspicion and jealousy of Nazi Germany's most dangerous men. Reinhard "Hangman" Heydrich once tried to get the doctor arrested. Two Gestapo men got him out of bed in the middle of the night and demanded to know why he was treating Jewish patients. Didn't he know, they asked, that this was a crime for a German doctor? Kersten calmly told them that as a Finn he could treat anyone he pleased. He showed them his passport and they left considerably subdued. No one had told them that he was not a German. When Himmler found out about the incident, he gave a general order that under no circumstances was Kersten ever to be molested again—by anyone. The Reichsführer was highly displeased that his doctor, of all people, should treat Jews, but he did not want to antagonize Kersten, and never brought the matter up again.

Heydrich, however, was not easily discouraged. In the winter of 1941, the S.S. and the Gestapo were making plans to deport the *entire* population of Holland to Poland, and move German peasants into the stolen country. When he'd learned of Hitler's mad idea, Kersten managed to turn Himmler against it and then to get the S.S. chief to convince the Führer of its unfeasibility. It was thus due to Kersten's efforts that the deportation was never begun.

So Heydrich became even more suspicious of Kersten than before. He suspected Kersten's connection with the Dutch resistance, but could not prove it. In a private meeting with the doctor, he threatened not to stop until he got what he wanted—Kersten's head. Fortunately, Heydrich was assassinated in Czechoslovakia the following June.

Another of Kersten's fantastic behind-the-scenes feats was the sabotaging of a Nazi plan to starve France. Hitler's scheme was for the Germans to purchase all the food they could get in France exclusively from black market sources, in gold if necessary. Food would be diverted from normal channels, and 12,000,000 would starve to death—to the blame of French black marketeers instead of the Germans.

Kersten squelched this one by convincing Himmler that the scheme would only drive more Frenchmen into the Underground, thereby causing Germany greater headaches than those she already had.

Kersten became even more deeply embroiled in dangerous

intrigues. Ernest Kaltenbrunner, Heydrich's successor, inherited the latter's hatred of the Finnish doctor. Fortunately, Kersten had friends in the Nazi camp. Walter Shellenberg, head of German counter espionage, and Gottlieb Berger, commanding general of the Waffen SS, alerted him to Kaltenbrunner's plot to murder him. When Himmler learned about it he bluntly told Kaltenbrunner that if anything ever happened to Kersten, he would be held personally accountable—with his own life.

During the food shortages, Kersten cleverly blackmailed Himmler into declaring Hartzwalde exempt from a German law which made it a capital offense to slaughter any animals without permission. Kersten at first simply paid no attention to this law. He had plenty of contraband meat at Hartzwalde. He harbored a band of Jehovah's Witnesses on the estate and protected them from the Nazis. They in turn repaid him with all the fresh meat, vegetables, and dairy products he needed.

One day he brought an "illegal" ham to Himmler, who loved pork and unwittingly dug into it with relish. Later, the S.S. chief was horrified: he had committed a crime punishable by death. Strange that this Nazi kingpin, who'd helped kill millions of innocent people, should be squeamish about violating a minor black market regulation, but Himmler was not known for his rational thought processes. In his perpetually petty bourgeois mind, he prided himself on his impeccable honesty. He was probably the only high-ranking Nazi with personal financial problems—despite the unlimited funds at his disposal. The thought of eating from an illegally slaughtered pig plagued his mind, and he immediately ordered Hartzwalde to be given extraterritorial status.

Felix Kersten later became a vital middleman in secret, international negotiations. He traveled extensively between Germany and Sweden, carrying clandestine messages from German anti-Nazis, and from the Dutch Underground. He also established a new base for himself after the Normandy invasion began: he rented an apartment in Stockholm.

Even after Finland declared war on Germany, Kersten retained Himmler's confidence. Shuttling back and forth between Stockholm and Berlin, he was instrumental in saving thousands of lives.

By December, 1944, for example, he obtained from Himmler an arrangement by which all Scandinavian prisoners were placed in one camp from which they would be trans-

ported to Sweden in Swedish Red Cross buses. Then Kersten swung the release of 3,000 Belgian, Dutch, French, and Polish prisoners. But his most amazing accomplishment was the freeing of 2,700 Jews. Hitler meant to keep the ovens going till the end, and these Jews were on their way to death camps. Instead, they were escorted to the Swiss border by a detachment of S.S. troops and released.

Near the war's end, when Himmler was about the only man left in Germany with armed forces at his direct disposal, Kersten obtained even more concessions from his stomach patient. On March 12, 1945, he got Himmler to sign an agreement not to dynamite the concentration camps, not to kill any more Jews, and to surrender the camps as the allied troops approached. Hitler in his final maniacal frenzy had ordered the Hague destroyed by V-2 rockets. Kersten persuaded Himmler not to carry out the destruction. And when the Swedish trucks evacuated the Scandinavian prisoners, Kersten saw to it that 5,000 Jews were included.

Finally, during the eleventh hour before Nazidom's collapse, Kersten arranged the incredible meeting between Himmler and a representative of the World Jewish Congress. After this the exhausted doctor abandoned his beloved Hartzwalde and flew to Stockholm where he joined the wife and sons he had gotten out of Germany only a little while earlier.

It was not until after the war that Felix Kersten's fantastic story was revealed. Scandinavian, Dutch and even Nazi witnesses testified to its truth. The Nazi Shellenberg, during and after his war criminal trial (and finally in his memoirs), reluctantly gave Kersten credit for his humanitarian efforts. Finally the British historian, H. R. Trevor-Roper, said, "I am glad to add such authority as I can to support the often challenged truth."

Felix Kersten died of a heart attack on April 16, 1960. Bon vivant that he was when able, he would hardly have wished to be remembered as confidant to one of the most infamous mass murderers of all time. And though in a sense he was such a confidant, there is no longer any question as to the real nature of his role in this strange but authentic drama. His position in history is honorable.

The Black Hole of Moscow

The island of Manhattan contains the world's tallest skyscrapers, for they can be anchored firmly in solid rock. Some cities cannot support high risers, however. Moscow is one. Sprawling out over soft, marshy land, the Russian capital is simply not suited to the erection of tall buildings.

Nevertheless, some years ago, the master builders of the Kremlin decided that they would outdo the Wall Street imperialists by raising the world's highest skyscraper. With due amount of local flourish, they cleared a large area and began excavations. The deeper they dug, the more disastrous the operation. Water continually seeped in, soft earth and sand caused cave-in after cave-in. The citizens of Moscow and visitors alike began to regard the latest Soviet project as a joke.

It was impossible to keep such extravagant diggings secret. They covered too large an area. Passers-by wondered how much longer the excavation would continue and when actual construction would begin. The steam shovels, earth movers, and bulldozers kept chugging away. Pumps continually sucked out muddy water and piped it off to some mysterious outlying destination. Few complained, though. A good many workers were being kept busy—so what if they were doing nothing more useful than digging a big hole right smack in the middle of Moscow?

Finally it dawned on someone in the upper echelons that Moscow was never going to get its skyscraper. Engineers and geologists pointed out that even if the thing actually succeeded in being built some day, chances were it would eventually sink into the mud, and prove to be even a bigger embarrassment than the inevitable one they faced already. When all the reports and recommendations had finally filtered through the clogged channels of Soviet bureaucracy, the skyscraper project ground creakily to a halt. But what was to be done with the hole? The earth and sand had been removed, and there was nothing left to fill it up with again. It was a thorny

situation. For weeks experts pondered, held meetings, wrote lengthy reports, and finally came to the only possible conclusion. If you can't fill it, cover it.

Accordingly the work resumed. But now it was work of a different character. It became the strenuous and embarrassing task of covering up a big, gaping mistake. It had been a mild joke before. Now it had become absolutely ludicrous, especially when it became common conversation in the foreign colony. The Russians for the most part kept their mouths shut. It was still the Stalin era, and Red officialdom did not recognize any humor in the situation. Any Soviet citizen who did was liable to wind up in Siberia—or worse.

One American correspondent, however, spotted a story at once. As soon as he had filled in all the details he could gather together, he dispatched it to the United States. Whether it ever arrived is another story. As for the correspondent, he was hustled out of the Soviet Union so fast, he barely had time to pack.

From that point on the Black Hole was surrounded by a miniature Iron Curtain of its own. The Russians certainly have never mentioned it again. It is even possible that some of them have actually forgotten about it. Such things are distinctly possible in Russia. It is safe to assume that the Black Hole is still there—just in case anyone wants to look for it. A word of caution though: don't expect the Russians to tell you where to find it.

The Ghost Who Outwitted His Kin

Since individuals involved in the following story are still living, certain details will be left out to protect their privacy.

In Paris, shortly after World War II, a young woman we shall call Angela fell in love with a wealthy, titled Spaniard. They did not get married, but made no pretenses about their relationship: they openly set up housekeeping together. One

reason for their not marrying was the strenuous objection of the marquis' family, who controlled much of his income. He bowed to their pressures, although with reluctance.

Eventually, however, the marquis did marry Angela. The family reacted with predictable dismay, but unaccountably agreed to receive the newlyweds during their honeymoon visit to Spain. The meeting was cool and uncomfortable. Angela was miserable in the presence of her husband's hostile relatives, and could hardly wait to go back to France. Then, tragedy struck. The marquis died suddenly. His family reacted unsufferably. They were unable to prevent Angela from attending the funeral, but immediately barred her from their homes. Stunned, she was made to feel like an intruding enemy.

Unfortunately, she had no friend in Spain to turn to. Her influential in-laws saw to it that Angela was given a minimum of comfort by everyone she met. She felt trapped, for the family could not abandon her completely due to her legal status as the late marquis' wife. Through an intermediary, they let Angela know their position in a short, decisive message. They were going to have the marriage posthumously annulled, returning her to the role they'd always pictured her in—the despised mistress. She was to get no inheritance, and was to leave Spain within 24 hours. She was to let them know where she wanted to go and they would make arrangements for her transportation. With a scornful note of self-righteousness, they told her she could keep whatever clothing, jewelry, and money she might have in her possession, since she had undoubtedly earned it.

Too dazed to dwell on her shabby treatment, Angela realized how completely she had absorbed herself in the life of her late husband. She had no job, no bank account, no place to live. Nor had the marquis felt he needed to carry any life insurance. Finally, she decided to go to England, because she did have some friends there. She conveyed the information to the family, and within 24 hours was on her way.

A few weeks later, while visiting the London home of her friends, Angela experienced what proved to be the most fantastic episode of her life. She was not the only visitor; the friends also had a house guest. Tea was served. The group had been seated for about five minutes when this house guest suddenly stiffened, stared strangely at Angela, and said,

"There's a man standing directly behind you—I think he's trying to tell you something."

All were startled, including the woman who had spoken, who quickly explained that she had psychic powers which manifested themselves erratically. Generally, she said, she did not care to discuss her visions because they upset others. But Angela leaned forward anxiously and asked the woman to describe the man, and to tell her if he was still there.

Not only was he still in the room, the description fitted the marquis to the minutest detail.

"You must help him to contact me," Angela begged.

"Maybe he can guide my hand," said the woman, "I've found that method to work before."

A pencil and pad were brought to her. She tilted her head a bit, closed her eyes, and poised the pencil over the paper. A hush fell over the room. Suddenly she began to write rapidly, until the pencil fell from her hand. She shuddered, then opened her eyes and handed the paper to Angela without looking at it.

Angela read it incredulously.

"It's the name of a bank in Paris." she said. "There's the address, a man's name, and a number—I don't understand."

Her friends understood. A long-distance phone call was placed. The man whose name had been written on the paper was very real. He explained to the startled young widow that the number was a bank code, given only to the person or persons entitled to access to a special safe deposit box.

The next day, still barely able to believe what was happening, Angela was on a plane bound for Paris. She found in the bank's safe deposit box a large quantity of cash, jewelry, and negotiable securities, plus a set of car keys and a rental receipt from a nearby garage. She presented the receipt at the garage and an expensive, late model sports car was turned over to her without question. In the trunk were several strongboxes containing more valuables and the automobile's license and ownership papers.

Angela also found in the car a letter addressed to her from her husband. It explained that his health was not as good as it seemed to be, and that he did not trust his family. If he should die, he was afraid that Angela would be cheated out of her rightful inheritance. This, said the message from beyond the grave, was even better than insurance.

Because of this amazing legacy, Angela was able to move to the United States where she eventually became highly successful in business. From the woman who had made it all possible, she never heard another word.

The Cowboy Picture That Solved A Mysterious Plane Crash

Late in the 1950's two airplanes mysteriously crashed southeast of Los Angeles, in an area favored by producers as a location for Western films. A collision was suspected, but evidence was lacking, since the tragedy occurred before the use of flight recorders. Authorities chalked off a military jet and a commercial airliner, together with crews and passengers. But the cause of the accident remained guesswork. . . .

We now shift to Hollywood, and the interior of a major motion picture film processing laboratory. Pandemonium usually reigns in such labs. Harried expediters try to explain over telephones why a particular batch of film is undeveloped, missing or scratched. Messengers, cameramen, producers, and film editors mill about the receiving department, shouting to be taken care of next. It is the least glamourous level of the film industry, and one of the most important, for without developing and printing, there would be no movies or television series.

The time is now several months after the plane crash, which has been forgotten by everyone but those intimately involved. In the film lab an angry producer, accompanied by an equally angry director, cameraman, and editor, argues with a chief technician. Finally we are able to make sense out of what they're saying. A tiny flash has appeared on the original negative of a scene in their forthcoming Great American Western, ruining it. It cannot be duplicated for less than many thousands of dollars, and maybe not at all. How does the lab expect to stay in business if it destroys the product of important clients?

The lab man, finally permitted to speak in his own defense,

explains that the flash was *not* put in the film by the laboratory, that it was *not* due to a defect in the film, and that it did *not* result from a faulty camera.

He concludes that the flash resulted from a phenomenon taking place in the sky, within camera range, at the time the scene was being shot, and offers the angry men a magnifying glass for a closer look. The producer looks first, the director next, the cameraman after that, and finally the editor. The latter, after squinting at the negative's black spot, suddenly exclaims,

"Wait a minute. . . ."

The others respect the editor's skill at identifying imperfections. They listen.

"I could swear there's something at the edge of the flash that looks like the tail of an airplane . . ."

The lab man's eyes narrow. "What day was this scene shot on?" he asks.

The producer, director, and cameraman remember the date, and the lab man remembers it as the day of the accident.

"Good God!" says the producer. "Do you think we might have gotten it on film during that take?"

"Sure," says the cameraman. "I was using a long lens. Everything from that horseman in the foreground to infinity would be in focus. I wanted to contrast him with the mountains in the background and create. . . ."

"What time of day was this shot?" interrupts the lab man.

"I remember," says the director. "It was just after lunch, maybe two or two-thirty."

The lab man telephones the Federal Avation Agency.

There is very little more to the story. The authorities checked the last radio communications from each of the ill-fated aircraft. The rest was easy. The commercial transport had requested permission to change its altitude. The jet had been off course, and turned up at the wrong place at the crucial moment.

Had not a movie crew been shooting at that precise instant, the exact time and place of the accident could never have been determined, a sound collision theory would never have been formulated, and the crash would have been relegated to the dead file of unsolved mysteries.

The Amazing Predictions about Africa That Came True—and the U.N. That Failed—Nearly a Century Ago

"Africa will be the continent of the 20th century."

Not an eyebrow-raising prediction if made today, but an extremely interesting one in that it was made close to a hundred years ago by the celebrated French author, Victor Hugo. One thing is certain: we are now witnessing in Africa the emergence of a giant, who after enduring bloodshed, plunder, and exploitation, is demanding a new role in the community of nations.

Misunderstandings have plagued Africa for centuries. With an area of over 11,000,000 square miles, little was known of the continent beyond the coastal regions until rather recently. As late as 1875, the only European powers with any substantial interests there were Great Britain, France, and Portugal.

Poor communications, ever-present fever, and rank incompetence made for perpetual friction. Officials, traders, and missionaries made little or no attempt to understand the native African peoples. Arab slavers, unchecked, penetrated deep into the heart of the continent, leaving a trail of ashes, disease, and human bones.

By the late 1870's the major European powers were fully aware that unlimited sources of wealth lay in Africa, and explorers, scoundrels, soldiers, and dreamers descended on the dark continent in droves. Charles Gordon, for one, was doomed to violence and death.

Gordon, a British general, was appointed by the Crown to the post of Governor-General of the Sudan in 1878. He served admirably. By 1882 he had all but driven out the slave traders, and had substantially enlarged the British sphere of influence both economically and politically. Under his administration, a deficit revenue was turned into a handsome profit.

But below the surface, a disaster was brewing that would shake the Empire from Whitehall to Calcutta. A fanatical

Moslem leader, known as the Mahdi, instituted a holy war in the Sudan, proclaiming himself to be the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammed. His cause gained momentum. Terrorism spread. By 1884 the British in the Sudan were in dire peril. Gordon gathered his forces in Khartoum and appraised his position, but his decision to withdraw came too late. Gordon's time had run out.

The hosts of the Mahdi struck with savage fury. For ten months Gordon miraculously held out against one ferocious assault after another, his Anglo-Egyptian forces were cut off from outside help, and supplies dwindled daily. Weakened by the blazing African sun, the bone-weary men either dropped from dysentery or were smashed down by humane bullets. On January 26, 1885, the curtain was rung down on the ill-fated garrison. Along with their gallant commander they were slaughtered to the last man as the Mahdi's shrieking hordes overran Khartoum. Fourteen years passed before the British were able to avenge this massacre, when at Omdurman, a force under Lord Kitchener finally ended the career of the Mahdi.

Thanks to a few farsighted men like Henry M. Stanley, not every page of African history was written in blood. The celebrated explorer saw clearly what lay ahead, for in 1877 he wrote to the *London Daily Telegraph,*

"I feel convinced that the question of the Congo will become a political one in time."

The major powers were then casting hungry glances at the rich, undeveloped Congo region. The Congo River provided a waterway, which Stanley correctly predicted would become "the grand highway of commerce to West and Central Africa."

Control of the Congo meant control of the entire region. At the time, Portugal claimed dominion over the river by virtue of having discovered its mouth, but Great Britain, France, and the United States refused to recognize her rights. By 1884, a Portuguese expedition up the Zambesi River, led by a Major Serpa Pinto, had resulted in substantial commercial developments in the surrounding area, and the *London Times* reflected British opinion of this achievement by acidly referring to it as "Major Serpa Pinto's gross outrage on humanity and affront to England."

Plainly, some positive action was required to relieve this growing tension. Stanley came up with a plan that was simple,

ambitious, and decades ahead of its time. He proposed international control of the Congo region.

The plan was well-received in many quarters. Among other considerations, it promised a higher standard of living to millions of Africans, for whom Stanley had the highest regard. Commenting on their capabilities, he remarked,

"I have seen a child of eight do more tricks of trade in an hour than the cleverest European trader on the Congo could do in a month."

On November 15, 1884, a conference was called in Berlin to deal with the Congo. Present were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Spain, Turkey, and the United States of America—in short, a model for the latterday U.N.

The conference, in a seven-chapter, 38-Article treaty, created a Congo Free State, comprising 1,600,000 square miles and corresponding to the present Congo Republic. A U.N.-like governing body was granted formal recognition. The treaty provided for free trade on the Congo and Niger Rivers; promised protection for natives, missionaries, and other travelers; abolished the slave trade, and established religious freedom. The treaty's crux, however, lay in its last two points. It was unanimously agreed that the Congo Basin should remain neutral in any future war, and that procedures were to be set up for the peaceful annexation of African territory by individual nations.

The recognition of this new state by the major world powers was undoubtedly revolutionary. But its need was urgent. Even as the delegates gathered around the conference table, certain of the nations were in hot pursuit of rich African possessions. Britain was at odds with Portugal, suspicious of France and Germany, ready to pounce on Turkey, and blandly ignoring Italy. Africa was a tinder box which could conceivably have ignited a large-scale conflagration unless the precautions of the Berlin Conference Treaty were taken.

What the annexation clause of the treaty boiled down to was a unilateral declaration of an open season on Africa, with safety measures to protect the hunters from each other. Some got off to a very good start. French Equatorial Africa, just north of the Congo Free State, gave France some 800 miles of Atlantic coastline with access to eight river basins—a total of 5,200 miles of navigable waters and an area of approximately

270,000 square miles. Portugal got an Atlantic Coast frontage of 995 miles, and land rich in oil, rubber, and minerals that was larger than Britain, France, Holland, and Belgium combined.

One slight flaw marred this grandiose, cooperative, empire-building. The treaty failed to consider the native Africans themselves, and the task of justifying this immense European takeover to the people whose lives were to be affected was left with the individual nations. In most cases this job was parceled out to thoroughly incompetent people motivated by petty, selfish interests. Idealistic but poorly informed missionaries only confused the natives, and frequently paid with their lives. European administration in Africa was generally a sorry tale of corruption and bungling. The Congo Free State Association ultimately collapsed, and in 1908, Belgium annexed the entire Congo region without a single protest from the rest of the world.

Thus, any good that resulted from European encroachments in Africa was severely offset by decades of organized brigandage on an international scale—all in the name of cooperation and progress. By the end of the 19th century, Africa had become a vast "country store," run by European and American merchants. Few worried about the future; there was plenty in the pot for all. But some, standing alone in their own time, sounded prophetic words of warning.

"It would seem," said an American writer, James Boyd, "that there must be a great reckoning day with the Christian powers, that they could find no better way of developing Africa than by fertilizing her soil with the carcasses of her native sons."

Boyd went on to condemn the legalized plunder and widespread exploitation of Africa, adding,

"We shall do nothing by passing and repassing through its endless forests. We must govern, organize, and above all *train its people before anything is accomplished.*"

This was said nearly 80 years before President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps. And another eerily prophetic statement of Boyd's bears repeating:

"Our posterity will watch with interest the development of Africa . . . lifted up by internal forces which are free and virile, buoyed by a spirit of self-helpfulness and independence, sustained from without by universal sympathy and admiration . . .

"The real transforming power of the continent may not at all be in white occupancy; it cannot be. . . . But it may lie, more wholly than anyone living suspects, in the natives themselves, assisted and encouraged by the leaven of civilization, gradually introduced.

"Africa means 200,000,000 people, backed by a peculiar climate, fortified by an environment which is as old as the beginnings of things.

"Let the civilization which is foreign to it beware how it strikes it, lest, in the end, the effort prove a sad confession of failure."

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